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LESSONS

# 1 Peter

A Living Hope



JULY AUG SEPT 1992

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Check with your local Adventist Book Center for the companion book to the Sabbath School lessons.

# Introduction to 1 Peter

## A Living Hope

First Peter, authored by the apostle Peter, brims with confidence as to the future of God's people. They are elect according to the foreknowledge of God, sanctified by the Spirit (1 Peter 1:2), and destined for an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance (1 Peter 1:4). Though subject to abuse and persecution, God's people will be kept by faith in His power. They will be presented in the last days as "exhibit A" for the world and the rest of the universe to see—a living demonstration of what the grace of God can do for fallen beings (1 Peter 1:4, 5).

All this is possible because of the resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter 1:3). Peter, who had lost his courage and hope through the arrest, trial, and death of Jesus, came to see nothing but glory and victory for those who remain true and obedient to God. He "hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

Christians, who were already suffering trials at the hands of a hostile civil government, would soon undergo severe persecution. The Lord's prediction as to the manner of Peter's death was soon to be fulfilled; the faithful apostle was to be a martyr. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 538.)

Peter's exuberance over the future of God's people was not a fantasy. Although he and his fellow believers were to suffer, they had a living hope that elevated them above the fury and hatred of this world. Their hope was centered in their risen Lord, who promised a future for His people so exciting that none would want to miss it. This hope and excitement shines forth from the pages of Peter's First Epistle.

Although 1 Peter was written for people in every age, it has special significance for God's church at the end of time. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 518.) When God's people experience a renewed manifestation of Satan's wrath, Peter's Epistle will inspire confidence, faith, and courage in many hearts.

### OVERVIEW OF 1 PETER

1:1-12	1:13-4:19	5:1-14
Begotten again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus	Exhortation to steadfast Christian living	Counsel to church officers and members; Doxology and greetings

# Peter: First Among Equals



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Matthew 16:13-20; Acts 1:15-22; Mark 14:66-72; John 21:15-19; Acts 9:32-43.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts 4:19).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Lovingly Jesus worked with Peter as He works with us, encouraging what was good and valuable, softening what was harsh, and purging what was offensive.

**PETER WAS GIVEN A SECOND CHANCE.** After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter was called before the Sanhedrin, the governing body of his people. Possibly some of the elders remembered his shameful denial of friendship with Jesus. On trial for preaching Jesus and the power of His resurrection (Acts 4:1-22), Peter was threatened with imprisonment and death. What followed was totally unexpected. Peter, the coward, had become the powerful defender of his Lord. Peter made good his second chance.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter credited Jesus with the healing of the disabled man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple (Acts 3:1-10). He informed the council that God had contradicted their verdict in regard to Jesus. They had judged Him a blasphemer worthy of death; God had exonerated His Son, raising Him to life.

Who was this man—this Peter—who wrote the letter we will study this quarter? By understanding Peter, we can better understand his message—and better understand ourselves.

**SPOKESMAN FOR THE APOSTLES (Matt. 16:13-20).**

**Apostolic lists.** The New Testament gives four lists containing the names of the apostles (Matt. 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:13). Matthew is the only writer who uses the word *first* in connection with Peter. However, in each of the lists, Peter's name appears first. This would indicate that Peter was respected and recognized as the most prominent of the apostles, even though his authority was no greater than that of his peers.

**Upon whom did Jesus build the Christian church? What authority did Jesus give to all the apostles? Matt. 16:13-20 (compare 18:18).**

On the basis of Matthew 16:13-20, some would have us believe Peter's authority exceeded that of his fellow apostles. This is not so. The keys given to Peter are the words of Jesus that will open the kingdom to those who accept them. (See Luke 11:52; compare *The Desire of Ages*, p. 413.) The rock upon which the Christian church was built is Jesus. (See Eph. 2:20; compare *The Desire of Ages*, p. 414.) Because of his nature, Peter became the leader of his peers, but he possessed no greater authority. "Christ is the foundation rock—the Gibraltar—upon which his church was at that moment being built and which is still in the process . . . of being built to this day."—Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament* (Kentucky: Renaissance Press, 1977), vol. 2, p. 544.

**Consider other occasions when Peter was spokesman for the disciples. Matt. 17:1-5; 19:27-30; Luke 8:45; 12:41; John 6:67-69.**

**"What is in it for us?"** The Greek text of Matthew 19:27 presents Peter's question in an interesting way: "In view of what You have just said, What is in it for us?" In Phillips' translation Peter asks, "What will that be worth to us?" To ask such a frank question was characteristic of Peter. His naturally outgoing personality made him a frequent spokesman for the disciples.

**Do you have questions that you would not dare ask Jesus publicly? When you have asked Him privately, what interesting answers have you received?**

**LEADER OF APOSTLES (Acts 1:15-22).**

By nature Peter was a man of action and enthusiasm. These characteristics evidently earned him an early leadership role among his fellow apostles, despite his human weaknesses.

**What type of leadership role did Peter assume in the Garden of Gethsemane? John 18:10.**

Although Peter took the initiative to fight in defense of his Master, his efforts were counteracted by Jesus Himself. When the disciples saw Jesus meekly submit to the arresting party, they could not understand His action. If they were not permitted to save Jesus from this hostile mob, they could at least save themselves. Again Peter acted as leader: "In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, 'they all forsook him, and fled.'"—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 697.

**Leader in the early church.** After the ascension of Jesus, Peter assumed a leadership role in the infant church. This is recorded in the early chapters of Acts.

**Be prepared to discuss Peter's role in the events described:**

Acts 1:15-26. The replacement of Judas.

Acts 2:1-47. The Pentecost sermon.

Acts 3:1-10. The healing of the disabled man.

Acts 3:12-26. The speech to the crowd on behalf of John and himself.

Acts 4:1-22. Peter's defense at his trial.

Acts 5:17-42. His defense at a second trial.

***Wearing Peter's sandals.*** Try to put yourself in Peter's sandals. After denying his Lord three times during Jesus' trial, he was the first apostle to whom Jesus revealed Himself after His resurrection. If you were Peter, what would have been the topic of conversation between yourself and your resurrected Lord?

**PETER'S DENIAL (Mark 14:66-72).**

When Jesus warned Peter of the rapidly approaching trial of his faith, what was Peter's response? Luke 22:33.

Offended by Jesus' words, the self-confident Peter pressed his resolve to stand by his Lord.

"When Peter said he would follow his Lord to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it; but he did not know himself. Hidden in his heart were elements of evil that circumstances would fan into life. Unless he was made conscious of his danger, these would prove his eternal ruin. The Saviour saw in him a self-love and assurance that would overbear even his love for Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 673.

The self-sufficient Christian is an easy prey for Satan because he does not have a correct knowledge of himself. But here is a promise for all who are willing to set self aside and trust in God: "There is no power in the whole satanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God."—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 91.

**How did Peter act during Jesus' trial? Luke 22:54, 55.**

As John entered the judgment hall, he made no attempt to conceal his relationship with Jesus. Because he did not mingle with those who were reviling Jesus, he was not questioned. Because he did not assume a false character, he did not make himself liable to suspicion. Seeking a retired corner away from the mob, but as near as possible to Jesus, he watched and heard all that took place at the trial of his Lord. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 711, 712.)

By contrast, Peter tried to lose himself in the crowd. Assuming an air of indifference so his true identity might not be known, he joined in the jests being hurled at Jesus. But it all appeared so unnatural; he was acting a lie. He was setting himself up to be cut down by Satan.

**By acting a lie, Peter had put himself in an unenviable position. How did Satan take advantage of the situation? Mark 14:66-71. How did Jesus' reaction affect Peter? Luke 22:61, 62.**

**How have you felt when by word or action you have denied your Lord?**

**PETER'S RESTORATION (John 21:15-19).**

Because Peter's repentance was genuine, a dramatic change took place.

What evidence exists that the other apostles accepted Peter back into their group even before they saw the resurrected Lord? John 20:1-10. At what point was Peter given the assurance that Jesus had forgiven him? Luke 24:34.

**The restoration.** Peter had publicly disqualified himself to be an apostle. Now he was to be restored to that select group by a public confession. Three times Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him (John 21:15-19), and three times Peter assured Jesus that he did. With each response Jesus gave Peter a commission to care for His sheep.

What was the relationship between Jesus, the Master, and the apostles? John 15:14, 15.

It was from this special relationship with Jesus that Peter had disqualified himself. When Jesus asked Peter whether he loved Him (*agapao*), Peter replied with the verb (*phileo*), which forms the base for the word *friend* (*philos*). Thus Peter not only assured Jesus he loved Him but communicated that he loved Him as a true "friend"—as one who would be obediently loyal (John 15:14).

The third time Jesus asked the question, He changed the verb, "Simon, son of John, do you love [*phileo*] me?" (John 21:17, RSV). Although Peter was concerned that Jesus asked this question again, this time he had the assurance that he was accepted back into the society of Jesus' "friends."

To what extent will those who love Jesus follow His wishes? John 14:15; 1 John 5:3.

Peter committed himself to total loyalty to Christ—to all His leading and commands. Only the born-again Christian has the power to live in such complete unity with his Lord. (See 1 John 5:4, 5.)

How does your born-again relationship with Christ keep you from repeating Peter's failure?

**FAITHFUL UNDERSHEPHERD (Acts 9:32-43).**

With the exception of one recorded relapse (Gal. 2:11-14), Peter proved himself a loyal friend of Jesus.

**In addition to his powerful sermons in Acts 2-5, how else did Peter prove to be a faithful undershepherd?**

Acts 5:1-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 9:32-43 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 10:1-48 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 15:6-11 \_\_\_\_\_

"There had been a time in Peter's experience when he was unwilling to see the cross in the work of Christ. When the Saviour made known to the disciples His impending sufferings and death, Peter exclaimed, 'Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.' Matthew 16:22. Self-pity, which shrank from fellowship with Christ in suffering, prompted Peter's remonstrance. It was to the disciple a bitter lesson, and one which he learned but slowly, that the path of Christ on earth lay through agony and humiliation. But in the heat of the furnace fire he was to learn its lesson."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 525.

**How did Peter's life end?** "In the providence of God, Peter was permitted to close his ministry in Rome, where his imprisonment was ordered by the emperor Nero about the time of Paul's final arrest. Thus the two veteran apostles, who for many years had been widely separated in their labors, were to bear their last witness for Christ in the world's metropolis, and upon its soil to shed their blood as the seed of a vast harvest of saints and martyrs. . . .

"Once so unready to acknowledge the cross, he now counted it a joy to yield up his life for the gospel. . . . As a last favor he entreated his executioners that he might be nailed to the cross with his head downward. The request was granted, and in this manner died the great apostle Peter."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 537, 538.

**Draw up a list of Peter's characteristics before and after his conversion. What are the differences? Has your appreciation of Peter changed as a result of your study?**

**FOR FURTHER STUDY:** Consider Peter's role in the events described in Acts 4:32-5:42. Read the following from *The Acts of the Apostles*, "A Warning Against Hypocrisy," pp. 70-76; "Before the Sanhedrin," pp. 77-86.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Since we live in a world that is hostile toward God, is it ever wise to hide your church affiliation?
2. Why do you think the Lord chose Peter to preach the great sermon on the Day of Pentecost recorded in Acts 2? Why did He not choose one of the other apostles, who had not publicly denied Him? On what basis does the Lord choose leaders—personality? ability? character?

**SUMMARY:** There is much that we can learn from Peter's life—the dangers of self-sufficiency, loyalty in the face of opposition, courage in the face of danger, and reliance upon the strength of Christ. But perhaps the one thing we learn above all else is the love, patience, and tender pity that Jesus has for His erring children.



What are you going to do with your money? I'm saving mine to give on Thirteenth Sabbath, September 26th, for the children in the Antillian Union and the North Mexican Union to have new chapels.

# Elect Strangers and Pilgrims



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 1:1, 2; 4:3, 4; 5:12-14.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Peter 1:2).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Peter addresses his letter to those who have heard or read the gospel invitation and have responded—the elect in Asia Minor and those from all places and periods throughout the Christian era.

**THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER WAS COMMISSIONED BY JESUS.** When He told Peter that Satan desired to sift him as wheat, Jesus added the commission, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32). When Peter was restored to the society of Jesus' friends, he was instructed to tend to the lambs and sheep (John 21:15-17). The first letter of Peter is a fulfillment, in part, of the Lord's commission. It is a pastoral letter that encourages and exhorts the weary pilgrim to faithfulness and steadfast endurance, while it addresses the destiny of God's people with confidence. Its words and phrases reflect the experience of the author, bearing "the impress of having been written by one in whom the sufferings of Christ and also His consolation had been made to abound; one whose entire being had been transformed by grace, and whose hope of eternal life was sure and steadfast."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 517.

**A LETTER FROM BABYLON (1 Peter 1:1; 5:13).**

**To what position of responsibility had Peter been called? 1 Peter 1:1.**

An apostle is "a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders."—Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., n.d.), p. 68. The apostle Paul defended his apostleship by reminding his readers that he had received direct revelations from God. (See 2 Cor. 12:1-12.) He spoke of "the signs of an apostle . . . wonders, and mighty deeds" (verse 12). In his direct association with Jesus, Peter had received direct revelations from God, and the book of Acts records the miracles and mighty deeds the Holy Spirit performed through him after Jesus' ascension.

Peter identified himself as an apostle because: (1) he had associated directly with Jesus for the period of His ministry, (2) he was selected by Jesus from among a multitude of disciples to be one of His closest followers—followers whom Jesus called apostles (Luke 6:12-16), and (3) he had been commissioned by Jesus to do a special work of shepherding (Luke 22:32; John 21:15-17).

There is no record of Peter's apostleship's being challenged as there is of Paul's. On several occasions Paul began his Epistles with a defense of his calling. (See Gal. 1:1, 11, 12.) Peter offers no such defense. He simply identifies himself as one who had been chosen by Jesus to carry out special orders that had been given to him.

**From what city did Peter write his letter? 1 Peter 5:13.**

The actual city of Babylon or the region in which this proud capital of the Chaldean empire once stood is not to be understood as the site from which Peter wrote his letter. The name "Babylon" was used as a safeguard and an allegory to identify the city of Rome, because it was "becoming the oppressor of the new . . . Israel."—J. H. A. Hart, "The First Epistle General of Peter," *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), vol. 5, p. 80.

**What authority should apostolic writings have for Christian believers? (See Eph. 2:20; 3:5.) What relationship do you see between these writings and inspired writings not included in the Bible? (See Joel 2:28, 29.)**

**PETER IN ROME (1 Peter 5:12).**

What attitude toward Christians by non-Christians is implied in Peter's First Epistle? 1 Peter 2:12; 4:12-16.

**What was Peter doing in Rome?** The indications are that Peter wrote this Epistle toward the end of his life. Possibly he was writing at the time of Nero's persecution. We have been told: (1) Peter was arrested at about the time of Paul's second arrest (A.D. 66); (2) Peter was in Rome when arrested; (3) he had been exposing the deceptions and defeating the plots of Simon Magus, the sorcerer; and (4) Nero, a believer in magic and a patron of Simon, ordered Peter's arrest. (See *The Story of Redemption*, p. 315.)

What experience had Peter previously had with Simon the sorcerer? Acts 8:4-24.

Simon Magus, the sorcerer, had previously passed himself off as the great power of God (Acts 8:9, 10). When confronted by the preaching of Philip, apparently the power of Satan in Simon's life was temporarily broken. Later the evil one resumed control.

In Rome the two men, representing two conflicting supernatural powers, met again. Peter demonstrated that Simon did not represent the power of God, but was a fraud. However, another representative of Satan came to Simon's aid. After his arrest by Nero, Peter laid down his life as a martyr for the gospel.

One argument used by those who deny that Peter wrote this Epistle is the good quality of Greek in which this Epistle is written. How can this be explained? 1 Peter 5:12.

The word *by* can mean that Silvanus was the secretary who took Peter's dictation and put Peter's words on paper (parchment), using his own skill with the Greek language. However, note the change wrought by the gift of tongues on the Day of Pentecost: "From this time forth the language of the disciples was pure, simple, and accurate, whether they spoke in their native tongue or in a foreign language."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40.

Who was the well-known Bible writer who attended Peter when he was writing his Epistle? 1 Peter 5:13 (compare Acts 12:12, 13, 25; 13:13; 15:37-40; 2 Tim. 4:11).

## THE ELECT PILGRIMS (1 Peter 1:1).

Who were the recipients of Peter's letter? 1 Peter 1:1.

The Greek text says: "To the elect pilgrims (sojourners) of the dispersion." There are three important ideas embedded in this phrase—elect, pilgrims, dispersion.

**Elect.** Two very common ideas attached to the word *elect* are predestination based on arbitrary divine decrees and triumphalism (undue confidence in one's beliefs). In harmony with the rest of the New Testament, Peter's Epistle does not reflect either of these erroneous ideas. Peter had learned by his bitter experience in Caiaphas's courtyard that there is no place for triumphalism or boasting in the Christian's experience. The apostle Paul speaks of predestination based on God's foreknowledge of individual response to His grace.

**From the following verses, identify the elect whom God has predestined. Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:5, 11, 12.**

Notice that God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge of human choice (Rom. 8:29).

Ellen White defines the word *elect*: "Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The *provisions* of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

**Elect pilgrims.** Peter is writing to a special group of pilgrims—an elect group of pilgrims. Heaven is their true home.

**Elect pilgrims of the dispersion.** The "exiles of the dispersion" (1 Peter 1:1, RSV) were the Jews who had been scattered all over the Roman world and beyond. But Peter is using this well-known phrase in a new way to address a new Israel who are strangers and pilgrims in the alien environment of sin. That Peter has his fellow Christians (Gentiles) in mind is made clear in verses 3 and 4.

Do you regard yourself as one of God's elect? Why?

## A MESSAGE FOR GENTILES (1 Peter 4:3, 4).

What would indicate that these "elect pilgrims of the dispersion" are not Jewish converts to Christianity, but are Gentile converts? 1 Peter 1:14; 2:10; 4:3, 4.

Examine the map below, and locate the following:

1. The churches founded by Paul in the province of Galatia during his first missionary tour.
2. The areas to which Peter wrote (1 Peter 1:1).



Although we do not have direct evidence that Peter worked in this area of the Roman Empire, we are told that he did bear his testimony in many lands. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 517.) In examining the map, it becomes clear that Peter's Epistle is a circular letter addressed to the leading Christian churches in Asia Minor. The churches of Galatia raised up by Paul and the seven churches of Revelation were included by Peter as being among the elect pilgrims of the dispersion.

Why should Gentile converts to Christianity be especially grateful to Jews? What special blessings have Jews passed on to Gentiles?

**QUALIFIED BY THE TRINITY (1 Peter 1:2).**

As you read verse 2, look for the three phrases that explain election. Write down each phrase and the member of the Trinity involved in the experience described by Peter.

Phrase	Member of Trinity
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Elect according to the foreknowledge of God.** Although God is all-knowing, and the future is open to Him as if it were the present and the past, His foreknowledge does not determine a person's destiny; it does not short-circuit the freedom of choice He has given to His earthly children. "There is no such thing in the Word of God as unconditional election."—Ellen G. White Comments, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

"Everyone who will humble himself as a little child, who will receive and obey the Word of God with a child's simplicity, will be among the elect of God."—Ellen G. White Comments, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1114.

**Elect by means of sanctification through the power of the Spirit.** In the phrase "by the sanctification of the Spirit," the Spirit is the One who acts, and sanctification is the action that is performed. Sanctification (holiness) is a gift of the Holy Spirit, not a characteristic earned by mere human effort. (See 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13.) By permitting this work of the Spirit in one's life, a person is qualified to be among the elect.

**Elect for the purpose of obedience and cleansing by the blood of Jesus.** The existence of the elect denies Satan's charges against God.

1. Their lives are committed to doing God's will, and they are empowered by the Spirit to fulfill God's purpose—obedience to Him. (See John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-5.)

2. Cleansing believers by the blood of Jesus and justifying them because of His death, God has shown His love for mankind. He is preparing a people to be taken into His everlasting kingdom.

**As one of God's elect, in what ways do you think God wants you to cooperate with His endeavors to prepare you and others to spend eternity with Him?**

**FURTHER STUDY:** On the experience of holiness, see: 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Col. 2:10. On the experience of growth in holiness, see: 1 Thess. 3:11-4:3; 2 Cor. 3:18. Read "The Call by the Sea," *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 244-251; and "God's Purpose for His Church," *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 9-16.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Ancient letter writers sometimes gave the ideas to a secretary (amanuensis), who expressed the writer's thought in his own words. If this is the manner in which some New Testament books were written, how would this fact affect your concept of inspiration? (Compare 1 Peter 5:12.)
2. How does the gift of the freedom of choice relate to God's predestination?
3. How do the three prepositional phrases of 1 Peter 1:2 convey the optimism and positive outlook that Peter has regarding the present condition and the future of God's people?
4. Holiness, a qualification for heaven (Heb. 12:14), is a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:2). But we are judged by our works (Rev. 22:12; 20:12; 1 Peter 1:17; 2 Cor. 5:10). Why? What part do works play in salvation?
5. A friend of yours thinks there is no hope for him. Because of his many failures, he believes that he was born to be lost. How would you share with him the great truth that God wants him to be saved?

**SUMMARY:** The three members of the Godhead are directly involved in the redemption of the elect. In consultation with the Spirit and the Son, the all-knowing Father has devised a plan to redeem the human family. Based on the death of the Son, the Holy Spirit bestows Himself upon those who believe. Thus He gives them holiness (1 Peter 1:2). By shedding His blood, the Son has made it possible for every person to stand justified before God. This whole divine plan prepares God's elect for eternal fellowship with Him because they have received His power for obedience to His law.

# Our Living Hope



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 1:3-5.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Acceptance of Jesus brings a hope that touches every moment and every aspect of life—the family, the job, personal relationships, recreation, as well as the personal, quiet moments when we are alone with our thoughts. Christians see the future as full of promise; they expect the dawn of a glorious morning.

**ONE OF ELLEN WHITE'S FAVORITE PASSAGES.** 1 Peter 1:3-9 is among several passages of Scripture favored by Ellen White, probably because God had shown her the preciousness of the promises these verses contain. On several occasions she quoted these verses, or portions of them, to people who were discouraged and beginning to falter in their Christian experience. Often she would let Peter's words stand without comment, giving the reader time to sample the apostle's faith and confidence in Jesus.

In these verses, a portion of which we will study this week, can be found "most precious promises, the foundation for large expectations, if we will act upon the instruction given."—Manuscript 81, 1908. As you study this week's lesson, savor each word written by Peter, weigh each promise, catch his excitement about the future, and rejoice in our living hope.

**OUR LIVING HOPE (1 Peter 1:3).**

**Blessed be God.** Peter's heart was now full of praise.

"When Christ was crucified, they did not believe that He would rise. He had stated plainly that He was to rise on the third day, but they were perplexed to know what He meant. This lack of comprehension left them at the time of His death in utter hopelessness."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 26.

**What event changed the outlook of Jesus' followers? 1 Peter 1:3.**

"This God is not only the Father of our Lord, but also the One who gave us the new birth (John 3:3, 7). For what purpose? . . . The result, since God's purposes are always identical with His results, is (a) that, having been born from above, by the miracle of spiritual regeneration, we now have a hope that is perennially alive. . . . All that God does for us is by means of, and therefore contingent upon, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ in the same body in which He suffered at Calvary. There is no 'living hope' if Jesus is dead (1 Cor. 15:12-19)."—Randolph O. Yeager, *The Renaissance New Testament* (Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican, 1985), vol. 17, p. 57.

**Hope of future immortality.** The gift of the new-birth experience involves the bestowal of eternal life upon the believing, repentant sinner. (See John 3:36; 1 John 5:11-14.) Fellowship with Christ finally culminates in the thrilling transformation to immortality at the second advent of Jesus. (See 1 Cor. 15:51-54.)

**What were the personal feelings of the apostles before and after the resurrection of Jesus?**

**Before: Luke 24:1-11** \_\_\_\_\_

**After: Luke 24:52, 53** \_\_\_\_\_

"Their enemies expected to see upon their faces an expression of sorrow and defeat. Instead of this there was only gladness and triumph. Their faces were aglow with a happiness not born of earth."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 832.

**How would you describe the practical effect on your life of the hope resulting from the resurrection of Christ?**

## A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF MISSION

What changes did the resurrection bring to the apostles' understanding of Jesus' mission on earth?

Before: Luke 18:31-34; 24:21 \_\_\_\_\_

After: Luke 24:27, 32, 45 \_\_\_\_\_

The disciples thought the Messiah would establish an earthly kingdom and exalt Israel to international predominance. After the resurrection, they caught a vision of the suffering Saviour, bearing the sins of the world.

What change took place in the disciples' understanding of their own role in Jesus' kingdom?

Before: Matt. 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37 \_\_\_\_\_

Personal ambition works havoc with spiritual commitment and dedication to unselfish service.

After: Acts 1:3-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Petty political parochialism gave way to the vision of world evangelism. They went to their knees with the earnest plea that their living Lord would pour out upon them the empowering Holy Spirit. Differences were put away; brother was bound in fellowship with brother. Jesus' will became the paramount concern. (See *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.)

What change took place in the apostles' attitude toward Gentiles, and how would this change affect their mission?

Before: Matt. 15:21-28 \_\_\_\_\_

Nothing more effectively cripples the capacity to serve God and humanity than prejudice and bigotry. It is impossible to relieve aching hearts and distracted minds while viewing their owners as inferior, second-class citizens. (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 402.)

After: Acts 10:44-48 \_\_\_\_\_

Peter reminded his fellow Jews that as God fulfilled His covenant with Abraham, the blessings of salvation would extend to all the families of earth.

**OUR INHERITANCE (1 Peter 1:4).**

Peter was a child of Abraham, a son of the covenant, an heir of the promises. The confidence of Peter's generation that the inheritance of the promises contained in the Abrahamic covenant was a sure thing is reflected by two contemporaries—Paul and Nicodemus.

Paul wrote, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:4, 5).

Nicodemus "was startled at the thought of a kingdom too pure for him to see in his present state. . . . But by virtue of his birth as an Israelite he regarded himself as sure of a place in the kingdom of God. He felt that he needed no change."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 171.

**What kind of inheritance is the prospect of every born-again believer in Christ? 1 Peter 1:4.**

The earthly aspirations of Jesus' disciples gave way to an indescribable longing for the "better land." Notice the three characteristics of the heavenly inheritance that Peter envisions: "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (RSV). There will be no death there, no perishable forms of life. There will be no sin there; defilement is destroyed when Jesus appears. There will be no ugliness there; beauty will not fade. Eternal youth will replace the ravages of old age; eternal spring will replace the fading beauty of fall and the stark austerity of winter.

**In what sense are we joint heirs with Christ? Rom. 8:17.**

**An incomprehensible mystery.** As the promised Seed of Abraham, Jesus realized the fulfillment of the promises contained in the covenant God made with Abraham. (See Gen. 15:1-6; 17:1-8.) He now shares them with us. When we accept Jesus as our Saviour, we are adopted by God (Rom. 8:15). As His adopted children we become heirs (Rom. 8:17). We share with Jesus the riches and joys that He possesses, because we are now joint heirs with Him.

**The fulfillment of our mission must precede the reception of our heavenly inheritance. Are there earthly considerations that are hindering our involvement in mission? What suggestions do you have? How can these hindrances be removed?**

**OUR SECURITY (1 Peter 1:5, first part).**

**How does God show His love for His earthly children? 1 Peter 1:5, first part; Ps. 34:7.**

The Greek word translated "kept" in the KJV is more accurately rendered "guarded" by the RSV and "shielded" by the NIV. It is a military term that means to protect or to guard with the use of troops.

"Every redeemed one will understand the ministry of angels in his own life. The angel who was his guardian from his earliest moment; the angel who watched his steps, and covered his head in the day of peril; the angel who was with him in the valley of the shadow of death, who marked his resting place, who was the first to greet him in the resurrection morning—what will it be to hold converse with him, and to learn the history of divine interposition in the individual life, of heavenly co-operation in every work for humanity!"—*Education*, p. 305.

**Besides our guardian angel, through what other means does the power of God protect us? Ps. 119:11.**

There is life-giving power and protecting capability in God's Word. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to deliver us from evil. Faced by the tempter, Jesus appealed to the Word (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). The devil cannot invade the mind of the individual who daily communes with Jesus through the Word.

**What assurances are we given that evil will not overcome us? Matt. 16:18 (compare Isa. 26:20, 21).**

"The Lord's faithful servants will receive the bitterest persecution from false teachers, who will not hear the Word of God, and who prepare stumbling blocks to put in the way of those who would hear. But God's people are not to fear. Satan cannot go beyond his limit. The Lord will be the defense of His people. He regards the injury done to His servants for the truth's sake as done to Himself."—*Maranatha*, p. 191.

**What testimony can you give of the Lord's care for you?**

**OUR PART (1 Peter 1:5, second part)**

Although God protects and shields His people, what is required on our part? 1 Peter 1:5, second part.

"This powerful shield is ours if we live by faith in the living Christ. Faith is absolutely essential for Christian discipleship. It is by faith that we come to Christ, and it is by faith that we live for Him day by day (Gal. 3:11). Paul instructs us to use the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one (Eph. 6:16).

"The key to using this shield is to do so in God's power . . . and not our own. The promise of Jesus to us is that when we receive the Holy Spirit, we also receive the power of God (Acts 1:8). The Acts of the Apostles is a wonderful commentary of those brothers and sisters in the early church who lived by the power of God."—Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984), p. 116.

**What has God already prepared that He is waiting to reveal "in the last time"? 1 Peter 1:5 (compare Matt. 24:30, 31; 2 Thess. 1:7).**

Peter is speaking about the second coming of Christ. The enemies of God and of His people will be destroyed (Rev. 6:14-16). The living saints who have been sealed prior to the close of probation will be translated with the righteous dead who have been raised. (See Rev. 7:1-3, 15-17; 14:1-5; 1 Thess. 4:16-18.)

**Earth's final scene.** "It is at midnight that God manifests His power for the deliverance of His people. The sun appears, shining in its strength. Signs and wonders follow in quick succession. The wicked look with terror and amazement upon the scene, while the righteous behold with solemn joy the tokens of their deliverance. Everything in nature seems turned out of its course. The streams cease to flow. Dark heavy clouds come up and clash against each other. In the midst of the angry heavens is one clear space of indescribable glory, whence comes the voice of God like the sound of many waters, saying: 'It is done.' Revelation 16:17."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 636.

**What experiences have you had that illustrate the power of faith? For example, how has faith in Christ enabled you to overcome habits that used to control you? What does faith in Christ's coming do for you?**

**FURTHER STUDY:** As you consider the final deliverance of God's people, study the following passages: Matt. 24:30, 31; 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 18; Rev. 7:9-17. Read "God's People Delivered," *The Great Controversy*, pp. 635-652.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What means would you use to convince a skeptic that faith in Christ results in great power in the life?
2. How would you explain to a professing Christian who believes in the New Age philosophy that Christ is the only means of salvation and the Bible the ultimate authoritative source?
3. What evidence can you give from Scripture that Christ's coming will be seen by all, not only by those living in a particular geographical area?
4. What steps do you plan to take to ensure that, in these final days of earth's history, you will be "kept by the power of God"?

**SUMMARY:** The verses that we have studied this week from 1 Peter are filled with encouragement and assurance. How bright and happy our lives would be if we would accept by faith the message of these verses! The resurrection of Jesus has given us a new and living hope. We have an eternal inheritance that is being kept in trust for us. God loves us and shields us from the one who would destroy us. Although problems come into our lives, God keeps us from being overwhelmed and swept away. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

# The Triumph of Faith



*Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 1:6-12.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7).

**KEY THOUGHT.** The faith of God's people, purified by trial, culminates in their salvation. Prophets and angels have sought earnestly for an understanding of God's plan of salvation.

**FAITH TESTED.** When David, in the name of the God of Israel, accepted the challenge to fight Goliath, he proposed to fight with a staff and a sling. Despite King Saul's concern, David had faith that God could use his sling. He had defended his father's flocks from all predators. Previous encounters with danger and death had proved to him the genuineness of God's protecting love and the effectiveness of his sling. David's faith was the product of test and trial.

Last week we saw how God the Father had begotten the apostles again to a living hope and how He guards His earthly children (1 Peter 1:3-5). This week we will see that the trial of our faith will work to Jesus' glory and the salvation of our souls (1 Peter 1:6-9). In addition, we will see that, when the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets to write about the future fulfillment of God's plan to redeem men from sin, they did not completely understand all the implications of their statements (1 Peter 1:10-12).

**GENUINE FAITH (1 Peter 1:6, 7).**

Peter knew that the road the Christian must walk is strewn with hazards and difficulties. A famous preacher once said, "If you seek first the Kingdom of God, you will have trouble; but if you seek something else first, you will have nothing but trouble."—Charles S. Ball, "I & II Peter," *The Wesleyan Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 252.

**In what do Peter's readers rejoice? 1 Peter 1:6.**

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice" (KJV) takes all that goes before as its antecedent. Christians rejoice in (1) the living hope that has been made possible by the resurrection of Jesus, (2) the inheritance that is kept in trust for them in heaven, and (3) the knowledge that God has stationed a guard around them.

**How is faith made pure and strong? 1 Peter 1:7.**

"Faith, which is more precious than gold, originates not in the mines of the earth but in heaven. Faith is refined in the crucible of man's trials. Faith is God's gift to man. God, not man, determines the value of faith; and he reveals that the goal of man's faith is his salvation (1:9)."—Simon J. Kistemaker, "Expositions of the Epistles of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude," in *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 48.

**What is the last-day church invited to receive from the Lord? Rev. 3:18.**

"Gold tried in the fire" is faith tested by trial. "The assaults of Satan are strong, his delusions are subtle; but the Lord's eye is upon His people. Their affliction is great, the flames of the furnace seem about to consume them; but Jesus will bring them forth as gold tried in the fire. Their earthliness will be removed, that through them the image of Christ may be perfectly revealed."—*Prophets and Kings*, p. 589.

**Have the trials and temptations of life strengthened or weakened your faith? Why? If your faith has not grown, what changes do you think you can make to ensure that it grows in the future?**

**FAITH IS NOT SIGHT (1 Peter 1:8).**

**What motivates people to believe in Jesus and love Him, even though they have never seen Him (1 Peter 1:8)? John 14:16-20; 16:14.**

The believers to whom Peter was writing had not enjoyed his experience of associating with Christ on earth. Though buoyed up by their expectation of seeing their living Lord at His "appearing" (1 Peter 1:7), they had never yet seen Him. Even so, they loved Him sincerely and rejoiced in His fellowship "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8). Why? The only reasonable explanation is that Christ's presence and power were made real to them by the inner working of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence in the heart of the believer is the presence of Christ (John 14:18). He instructs regarding Christ's character and conveys His goodness.

**How does the experience of Thomas illustrate the point of 1 Peter 1:8? John 20:24-29.**

Thomas had been given evidence that Jesus had risen. (See John 20:18; Matt. 28:9, 10; Luke 24:34.)

But Thomas determined not to believe unless he saw Jesus for himself and could verify the fact that it was indeed the crucified Lord (John 20:25). We fault Thomas for his unbelief, but the position he took reflects the attitude of the other apostles recorded in the Gospels.

For example, when the women reported their encounter with the risen Lord, the apostles looked upon their experience as an idle tale (Luke 24:11). It was not until what they heard was confirmed by what they saw that they believed. Likewise the Emmaus disciples had heard the report of the women (Luke 24:22, 23), but they remained in doubt (verses 21, 25) until Jesus made Himself known to them (verses 30, 31). Only then did they believe (verses 32-35).

Although Jesus rejoices over those who believe in Him, no matter how faith may come, He had wished that Thomas would accept the testimony of his brethren. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

**What does Jesus' reaction to doubting Thomas indicate our attitude should be toward those who do not believe?**

## THE RESULTS OF FAITH (1 Peter 1:9).

What is the end result of the faith of those who love the One they have not seen? 1 Peter 1:9.

One major focus of Peter's comment is the second coming of Christ, at which time faith will meet its fruition. Peter had already reminded his readers that, because of their faith, they were "shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5, NIV; compare verse 7). This is a prevalent New Testament motif. (See 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 11:13-16, 39, 40; James 2:5.)

In what sense is the "goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:9, NIV), experienced now?

Eph. 2:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Eph. 3:17-19 \_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 3:9 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Tim. 6:12 \_\_\_\_\_

The New International Version correctly translates the Greek of 1 Peter 1:9: "for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." Because we receive by faith the saving grace of Jesus, we enjoy the blessings of present salvation. "We have been born anew to a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3, RSV). Jesus spoke of the kingdom in existence now. "The kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matt. 12:28). "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). The subjects of the kingdom of grace have Christ reigning in their hearts by the presence of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16, 17). For them the blessings of eternal life have begun (John 3:36; 1 John 5:11-13).

The *ultimate* goal of our faith is the eternal, heavenly kingdom of glory, where we receive our "inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" (1 Peter 1:4, RSV). Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). What a delightful paradox! Christ's kingdom is in our hearts, but it is still future. We relish now the joys of salvation, but look expectantly for the ultimate thrill of final salvation, "the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).

In what ways can you say that heaven has begun for you?

## THE FAITH OF THE PROPHETS (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

What do you and the inspired prophets have in common?  
1 Peter 1:10.

**A quest for knowledge.** Two things should be kept in mind when seeking to understand the prophets' desire to know the mysteries of God.

1. God did not reveal every detail of His plans to each prophet through whom He communicated with His people. Details were given, rather, through various prophets. So we find Daniel studying the writings of Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2) in order to understand when God proposed to bring the Jewish exiles home from Babylonian captivity.

2. The prophets did not always understand the full significance of what they were shown in vision and were inspired to write out. "Even the prophets who were favored with the special illumination of the Spirit did not fully comprehend the import of the revelations committed to them. The meaning was to be unfolded from age to age, as the people of God should need the instruction therein contained."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 344.

Thus the prophets had to search the Scriptures just as we do, in order to understand God's will and the plan of salvation.

What particular details of God's plan were the prophets trying to understand? 1 Peter 1:11.

Phillips paraphrases the verse: "They tried hard to discover to what time and to what sort of circumstances the Spirit of Christ working in them was referring. For he foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them." First, the prophets inquired into the *how* of the Messiah's suffering and glorification. Second, Peter says the prophets wanted to know *when* the Messiah would suffer the things they were inspired to write about, and *when* He would be glorified. What an advantage we have not only being able to read the prophecies of the coming Messiah, but to read the Gospel record and to see how these prophecies were fulfilled!

Even though the prophets did not fully understand the messages they were given, what evidence do we have that those messages are trustworthy?

**TO WHOM DID THE PROPHETS MINISTER? (1 Peter 1:12).**

What were the prophets told regarding the people for whom their writings were intended? 1 Peter 1:12.

To a certain extent the prophets understood what they wrote. But, because there were gaps in their understanding, they studied their own writings and those of other prophets in an attempt to fill in these gaps. (Compare Daniel 8 and 9.)

When Daniel questioned the angel about the meaning of some of the things he had been shown in vision, what was the angel's reply? Daniel 12:9, 10, 13.

After receiving the revelation, he was told to be content with simply writing out the vision. It was not necessary for him to understand its meaning. It was to be the privilege of another generation to understand it.

What did the angel mean when he told Daniel that he will stand in his "allotted place at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13, RSV)? Compare Revelation 10 with 14:6-12.

"After these seven thunders uttered their voices, the injunction comes to John as to Daniel in regard to the little book: 'Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered.' [Rev. 10:3, 4.] These relate to future events which will be disclosed in their order. Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. John sees the little book unsealed. Then Daniel's prophecies have their proper place in the first, second, and third angels' messages to be given to the world."—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 971.

Who besides prophets and people wish to have a deeper understanding of God's plan to redeem sinners? 1 Peter 1:12, last part.

Because the prophets wrote for future generations, which would see the fulfillment of their predictions, need Christians have any doubt about the validity of predictive prophecy? What does the fulfillment of prophecy do for your faith?

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Consider the work of the Holy Spirit in inspiring the prophets: Zech. 7:12; 1 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:5; 2 Peter 1:21. Read "Light Through Darkness" in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 343-354.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Peter tells us of the interest on the part of prophets and angels in God's plan for the redemption of man. What special interest should we take in the following aspects of God's plan? Why?

The importance of Christ's life on earth.

The reason for Christ's sufferings on the cross.

Bearing the image of God.

Possessing genuine faith and love.

Understanding and experiencing God's forgiveness.

Victory over besetting sins.

The means by which the Lord plans to finish His work in the earth.

**SUMMARY:** Peter completes the first part of his Epistle by dealing with the role of the Holy Spirit as the agent of inspiration and revelation. Through His work we have been given the infallible guide to heaven—the Bible. What He inspired chosen men to write has opened to our understanding, not only His own role in the plan of salvation but the roles of the Father and the Son—mysteries into which even the angels desire to look.

## Call to Holy Living



### *Sabbath Afternoon*

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 1:13-25.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18, 19).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Peter reminds us that the ransom paid for our redemption is beyond monetary value; neither silver nor gold can be compared to the value of the blood of Jesus, which has ransomed us from the power of sin. The ransom price indicates how valuable we are to God.

**THE BEGINNING OF HOLINESS.** Peter never forgot the day Jesus invited him to go fishing (Luke 5:1-11). Experience and knowledge of fish habits told Peter that the proposed fishing trip would be unsuccessful. We can understand Peter's utter amazement when he dropped the net exactly where Jesus indicated and it filled with fish to the point of tearing. Recognizing that he was in the presence of the Messiah, Peter fell to his knees and confessed: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

After Peter's confession, Jesus called him to service: "And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5:10). Only after the recognition and admission of our sinfulness can we hear God's call to holiness and service. Any holiness we think we possess before making a genuine confession like Peter's is a holiness that exists only in our own eyes.

**IMPERATIVES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING (1 Peter 1:13).**

Throughout 1 Peter 1:13-16, Peter presents a series of imperatives for nobler, holier Christian living. Although the imperative form is used to issue commands, it also is used to entreat people to action. Paul A. Cedar suggests that these imperatives embrace three steps that are to be followed if the Christian is to live a life of holiness: (1) be prepared (verse 13); (2) be obedient (verse 14); and (3) be holy (verses 15, 16). (See *The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude* [Waco, Texas: Word Books, Publishers, 1984], pp. 123-126.)

**What is the first command given by Peter? 1 Peter 1:13.**

Girding up the loins is a procedure that is foreign to Westerners but familiar to those who live in areas of the world where long robes are worn. When it is time for serious work, the skirt of the robe is gathered up and tucked under the girdle, or belt, around the waist. This leaves the limbs free for vigorous activity.

In entreating us to gird up the loins of the mind, Peter is calling us to serious spiritual activity.

**"The mind should be guarded carefully.** Nothing should be allowed to enter that will harm or destroy its healthy vigor. But to prevent this, it should be preoccupied with good seed, which, springing to life, will bring forth fruit-bearing branches."—*My Life Today*, p. 83. (See Phil. 4:8.)

**What else does Peter entreat his readers to do? 1 Peter 1:13.**

**Be sober.** Peter is calling his readers to vigilance against sin. That will follow naturally the girding up of the mind. The center of our spiritual nature resides within the brain. With the mind girded and the soul on its guard, all of the avenues that lead to the brain—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—will be fortified against Satan's attempts to use them as vehicles for temptation.

**Hope to the end (KJV).** Phillips translates this phrase: "rest the full weight of your hopes." Peter is admonishing us to have complete, perfect hope in the final realization of God's grace.

**To what extent is your mind under the control of the Holy Spirit? How can the thoughts that we entertain be completely under His divine control? (See 2 Cor. 10:4, 5.)**

**HOLY CONDUCT (1 Peter 1:14-16).**

Wishing to protect their new experience from the defilement of sin, what does Peter command his readers to do? 1 Peter 1:14.

**Obedient children or children of obedience?** The Greek text reads "children of obedience." "Obedient children" seems to convey the idea of yielding to the wishes of a superior. The act of obedience may be voluntary, or it may be done grudgingly. On the other hand, "children of obedience" seems to convey the idea that obedience comes from the heart and has become a spontaneous part of the lifestyle. There is truth in both phrases.

"The heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312. Obedience has become part of our experience.

Peter's concern that the children of obedience guard themselves against the danger of slipping back into their former lifestyle is an argument against the notion of once-saved-always-saved.

**To what does God call us? 1 Peter 1:15, 16 (compare Matt. 5:48; Luke 6:36).**

The word translated "conversation" (verse 15, KJV) means "conduct," "behavior." The instruction is that we are to emulate Jesus by being holy in everything we do. God commanded Israel on several occasions, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, RSV). God is calling us, as His children, to an experience in which our fallen human natures, our love for and bent to sinning, will be conquered and controlled by the Holy Spirit. We are to bear the image of His Son.

**Expel sin.** "The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466. (See Rom. 8:13.)

**Can you testify to your fellow Sabbath School class members how God has given you victory over sin?**

**RANSOMED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD (1 Peter 1:17-19).**

**What quality does God possess as judge? 1 Peter 1:17.**

Peter begins this section of our study by giving the reason why we should live out our time here on earth in a sober and circumspect manner. The One we call Father is also judge.

The child-Father relationship is carried over from verses 13-16. As children of obedience, we have nothing to fear from our Father-Judge or from the Son, to whom the Father has committed the work of judging. (See John 5:22; Acts 17:31.) He judges with perfect justice and impartiality. In fact, we can face the judgment with assurance, knowing that our wills are merged with the will of Jesus, our minds one with His mind. Thus when the Father sits as judge, He sees the image of His beloved Son. (Compare 1 John 4:17.)

**Strangers and pilgrims.** The Greek word translated "sojourning" (*paroikia*) gives a picture of one who is a temporary resident—a pilgrim. From this word we derive the English word *parochial* and the concept that is included in the word *parish*. The idea of being pilgrims or wanderers is tied to the wilderness experience of Israel. We are to pass the time of our sojourn in earth's wilderness in a state of preparedness, ready for final deliverance.

**What was the price paid for our ransom from sin? 1 Peter 1:18, 19.**

The ransom was not paid to Satan; God did not strike a deal with him. The ransom (price of release) Jesus paid on the cross for our sins involved His suffering our penalty for disobeying His law. He endured the infinite agony of separation from His Father—separation that seemed to Him to be eternal. (See 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 2:2; Isa. 53:5, 6.)

Peter compares the ransom price, the blood of Jesus, to that of a lamb without blemish or spot. His words allude to the Passover service. The Passover lamb that symbolized Jesus was to be without blemish. (See Ex. 12:5.) Its shed blood "ransomed" the Israelites from the plague of death that ravished Egypt and provided for their deliverance.

**What does Calvary mean to you? Make a mental list of the practical aspects of your life that would be drastically different if you had not accepted Christ's death for you.**

**THE BASIS OF OUR CONFIDENCE (1 Peter 1:20, 21).**

When were the arrangements for the sacrifice of the Lamb made? 1 Peter 1:20 (Rev. 13:8; Acts 2:23; 1 Cor. 2:7).

Sin did not catch God unprepared. Before the creation of this world God foresaw the rise of sin and its ultimate end. "Foreordained" in the KJV and "destined" in the RSV mean that God decided beforehand that His Son would die for the sins of the world. This does not mean that He predetermined the sin of mankind or that He rendered it impossible for Christ to fail in His mission. What God foresees He does not necessarily decree.

**"God had a knowledge of the events of the future,** even before the creation of the world. He did not make His purposes to fit circumstances, but He allowed matters to develop and work out. He did not work to bring about a certain condition of things, but He knew that such a condition would exist. The plan that should be carried out upon the defection of any of the high intelligences of heaven—this is the secret, the mystery which has been hid from ages. And an offering was prepared in the eternal purposes to do the very work which God has done for fallen humanity."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1082.

**"Manifest at the end of the times" (RSV).** Although the arrangements for the sacrifice were made in eternity past, before the world was created, the Lamb did not appear on earth until the appointed time. (See Gal. 4:4.) Peter refers to this event as taking place in the "last times" (1 Peter 1:20). The fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies—the coming of the Messiah, His sacrifice, the giving of the Holy Spirit—was seen as evidence by the early Christians that they were living in the last age.

**How does Peter reiterate the basis of our faith and hope?**  
1 Peter 1:21.

We have not seen Jesus with the natural eye (1 Peter 1:8); we were not there at the time of His resurrection; yet we believe He lives. Our faith and hope are in God.

If you were asked to give the reason for your faith and hope, what would you say? What evidence would you give to encourage a nonbeliever to accept your faith and hope?

**BORN AGAIN (1 Peter 1:22-25).**

**What is a most convincing evidence that a person has been born again? 1 Peter 1:22.**

Before Jesus' death the apostles had deep-seated jealousy toward one another, engaging in bitter competition over who was to be greatest in Jesus' kingdom. Jesus reminded them that those who are fit for His kingdom have a different spirit. "For he who is least among you all," Jesus said, "is the one who is great" (Luke 9:48, RSV).

**The preparation for Pentecost.** During the days between Jesus' ascension and the Day of Pentecost, the apostles followed certain steps to prepare their hearts for the promised Gift of God. One of these steps was making things right with fellow disciples. "Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 37.

**Genuine love for brethren and sisters is the most persuasive evidence that a Christian has been born again.** Peter says that a born-again Christian will love others with sincere love. There will be no hypocritical display.

**By what means are Christians born again? 1 Peter 1:23-25.**

Like good seed sown in a field, God's Word is planted in the human heart by the Holy Spirit. It produces a harvest of souls for God's kingdom. As the grass and its flower come and go, so do people, but the Word of God continues on, doing its saving work in willing hearts.

**What experience do believers enjoy as long as they allow the Holy Spirit to reign in their hearts? 1 John 3:3-9.**

Peter's message in 1 Peter 2:22, 23 parallels that of John. Peter says that obedience to the truth is "through the Spirit" made possible by the born-again experience in which the incorruptible Word of God takes possession of the willing human mind. John emphasizes that as long as the Seed, the Holy Spirit, possesses the heart, sin cannot dwell there (1 John 3:9; compare 1 John 5:18).

**How do we know that the Holy Spirit is reigning in our hearts?**

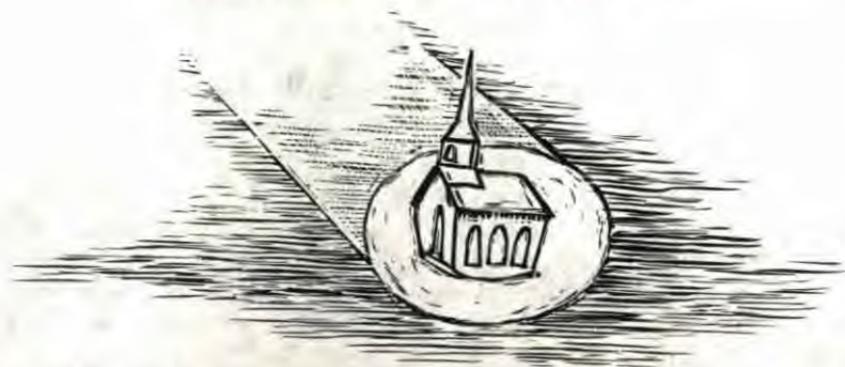
**FURTHER STUDY:** Compare the messages in Romans 8 and 1 John 3 with the message of 1 Peter 1:13-25. Read "Consecration" and "The Test of Discipleship" in *Steps to Christ*, pp. 43-48; 57-65.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is it perilous to depend only on "impressions" about what you should or should not do? How does this week's lesson establish that the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to keep us in the faith?
2. How would you answer a person who says that, because Jesus was "foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20), His victory over the devil was decreed and it was impossible for Him to sin? How do you establish that Jesus was our example in the battle with sin?
3. What does Peter's remark about "perishable things such as silver or gold" (1 Peter 1:18, RSV) imply regarding the danger of materialism?
4. Your next-door neighbor has no confidence in the Bible. She is a divorcee who has no time for religion. How would you go about leading her to believe in the truth and power of the Word of God?

**SUMMARY:** Peter uses a series of imperatives to invite his readers to prepare for the coming of Jesus. Ransomed by the blood of God's Passover Lamb and born again through the power of the Word, all children of obedience have confidence as they are judged by their heavenly Father. Because their conduct is directed by the Holy Spirit, they are kept from sinning. Their lives are consistent with the principles of the Word of God.

# God's Showcase



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 2:1-10.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

**KEY THOUGHT.** From a heterogeneous group of sinful people representing all nations of earth, Christ has fashioned a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a new and holy nation. Who would spurn the chance to be counted as one of its citizens, as one of God's own people?

**GOD'S CROWN JEWELS.** Behind the walls of the Tower of London, tucked away in the basement of an old building, is an underground vault. Big enough to accommodate two lines of passing tourists, the vault contains a large circular glass case. Within this case are displayed the crown jewels of England. Wide-eyed tourists circle the display case in double rows viewing the heavily jeweled coronation crowns, jewel-bedecked ceremonial swords, and other objects of earthly splendor, symbols of power and royalty in England for centuries.

God also has a display case that is easily accessible for all the world to marvel at. It is a spiritual house made up of all kinds of gems—living stones, people who reflect God's wonderful power and deeds.

**HOW ARE SINS LAID ASIDE? (1 Peter 2:1).**

Peter now deals with the living stones that must square up with the great Cornerstone if they are to fulfill God's purpose to build a spiritual house. Verse 1 lists sins offensive to God.

**Who has the responsibility of ridding the life of these sins?  
1 Peter 2:1, 2.**

The power to conquer sin comes from God. The will to have this power comes from the individual. Therefore, Peter informs his readers that they are responsible for laying aside sinful acts. Paul also emphasizes the responsibility of the individual in conquering sin when he says, "But if by the Spirit *you* put to death the deeds of the body you will live" (Rom. 8:13, RSV).

"The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

**What evidence do we have that victory over sin in the lives of Jesus' followers is not only possible, but imperative? Rom. 6:14; 2 Cor. 7:1; Rev. 3:2, 5.**

**Notice the three steps by which the soul expels sin:**

1. Rom. 8:9, 10. The powers of the soul are energized by the Holy Spirit. "The soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

2. Phil. 4:13. The powers of the soul obey the dictates of the human will. "What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man. . . . Everything depends on the right action of the will."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 47.

3. Rom. 8:13, 14. The human will fulfills the will of God because it has become an extension of His will. "When we submit ourselves to Christ . . . the will is merged in His will."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 312.

**How successful have you been in ridding sin from your life? In light of the above, explain Christ's part and our part in the process by which we obtain victory.**

**THE POWER OF THE WORD (1 Peter 2:1-3).**

Why are the sins listed in 1 Peter 2:1 especially offensive to God?

**Malice:** Intent to injure.

**Guile:** The Greek word literally means "fish bait." Something that is intended to do harm (the fish hook) is clothed in something that appears attractive (the bait).

**Hypocrisy:** Veiling true feelings or actions with intent to deceive.

**Envy:** Feelings of ill will toward another, who possesses something we desire.

**Evil speaking (slander):** Deliberately harming a person in the eyes of others by the use of words.

These sins create an atmosphere that drives away the Holy Spirit. God's sealed people in the last days will be free of these sins. (See Rev. 14:5, NIV.)

**What food are Christians to live on as the means of spiritual growth? 1 Peter 2:2.**

**Milk and meat.** Paul made a distinction between the milk of the Word intended for infants in the Christian life and the meat of the Word for mature Christians. (See Heb. 5:12-14.) Peter's point is that, at every stage of spiritual growth, Christians are to crave God's Word as infants crave physical nourishment.

**How powerful is God's Word when we are armed with it in our battle against sin? Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12.**

Many people professing to believe the Bible replace its guidance with inner impressions, supposed to come from God, but which come from other sources. (See Will Baron, *Deceived by the New Age*, [Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press, 1990.]) The Holy Spirit works through the Word to give us victory over sin. Our only safety is in daily study of the Word. Minds fortified by the Word, interpreted to them by the Spirit, are impregnable to the assaults of Satan.

**How important is God's Word to you? Do you read it every day? Do you turn to it when tempted, as Jesus did?**

**A SPIRITUAL HOUSE (1 Peter 2:4, 5).**

Peter appeals to a familiar Old Testament motif—a cornerstone—to help his readers see how their lives, patterned after the life of Jesus, can be part of God's spiritual temple. The Scriptures use a rock of defense or a fortress to symbolize God's strength and saving power for those who trust in Him. (See Ex. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4.) Peter uses the Greek word that refers to a stone worked by craftsmen, shaped for use in construction (1 Peter 2:4).

**How are believers in Christ, as living stones, built into a spiritual house? 1 Peter 2:4, 5.**

**What constitutes a living stone?** Fellowship with Christ results in likeness to Him. "It is not a form of godliness, nor a name upon the church records, that constitutes 'a living stone' in the spiritual building. It is being renewed in knowledge and true holiness, being crucified to the world and made alive in Christ, that unites the soul to God."—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 168.

**Stones from the quarry.** We are rough stones taken from the quarry of sin. Through His truth and our life's experiences, God shapes us to fit into the living, spiritual temple He is building. Each stone must be squared with the great Cornerstone so as to emulate His beauty.

**Is one stone of more value than another?** "Elevated position has no power to sanctify the heart. God permits them to hold these positions that He may prove whether they will reveal the character of God or the character of weak, finite humanity, which has never been fully under God's discipline; but positions have no power to develop a man's character. It rests wholly with the man himself to prove whether he will work himself, which means that Satan will work him, or whether he will be worked by the Holy Spirit."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 288.

**Holy priesthood.** The living stones that are built into the spiritual house form a holy priesthood that offers spiritual sacrifices.

**After reading the following texts, how would you define a spiritual sacrifice? Ps. 51:17; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15, 16.**

**As part of God's "holy priesthood," what contribution are you making to its spiritual ministry?**

## THE CORNERSTONE (1 Peter 2:6, 8).

How do the following Old Testament prophecies quoted by Peter apply to Jesus?

Isa. 28:16 (1 Peter 2:6) \_\_\_\_\_

Ps. 118:22 (1 Peter 2:7) \_\_\_\_\_

Isa. 8:14 (1 Peter 2:8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Fulfillment in Jesus.** "For use in the foundation [of Solomon's temple], one stone of unusual size and peculiar shape had been brought; but the workmen could find no place for it, and would not accept it. . . . But at last attention was called to the stone so long rejected. It had been exposed to the air, to sun and storm, without revealing the slightest crack. The builders examined this stone. It had borne every test but one. If it could bear the test of severe pressure, they decided to accept it for the cornerstone. The trial was made. The stone was accepted, brought to its assigned position, and found to be an exact fit. In prophetic vision, Isaiah was shown that this stone was a symbol of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 598.

**In what way did Jesus apply this prophecy to Himself? Matt. 21:42, 43.**

Peter identified the spiritual leaders of the chosen nation as the builders who rejected the divinely chosen Cornerstone. (See Acts 4:6-12.)

**Two roles played by the cornerstone** in the construction of ancient buildings symbolize Jesus' work.

1. All other stones used in construction were squared with the cornerstone. This stone determined the design and shape of the building. Therefore, all other stones placed in the structure of the spiritual house being built by God must reflect the design and appearance of the Cornerstone.

2. Jesus is also the foundation upon which the spiritual house is built (1 Cor. 3:10, 11). The apostles and the prophets are referred to as the foundation of God's holy temple because they present Jesus to sinners as the basis of their faith and salvation (Eph. 2:19-22).

**List the practical ways in which your life reveals Jesus as its Cornerstone.**

**A HOLY NATION (1 Peter 2:8-10).**

What are the results of the ways in which people relate to the Cornerstone? 1 Peter 2:8; Luke 20:17, 18.

"To fall upon the Rock and be broken is to give up our self-righteousness and to go to Christ with the humility of a child, repenting of our transgressions, and believing in His forgiving love."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 599. To those who reject Him, Jesus becomes a Rock of offense. Those who respond in repentance and surrender will live with Him forever.

List the characteristics once ascribed to ancient Israel, and then compare them with 1 Peter 2:9.

Ex. 19:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Deut. 7:6 \_\_\_\_\_

**The new Israel.** The New Testament teaches that God's plan did not fail when the chosen people rejected the Messiah. The apostles and their converts are described in the same terms once given to ancient Israel. (Compare Gal. 3:7-9, 26-29.)

**The characteristics of believers in Christ.** "Like Israel of old, the church is a *chosen people* (see Isa. 43:20). . . . The church is also a *royal priesthood* (Exod. 19:6). Every member is a priest because he has direct access to God. . . . Israel was a *holy nation* because it was set apart or consecrated to the service of God (Exod. 19:6). . . . By the new birth all believers become one race. Their distinguishing characteristic is that they are 'holy'—separate from sin and set apart for God and his purposes. They are, therefore, a *people belonging to God* (Isa. 43:21). The AV translation, 'peculiar people,' has raised many an eyebrow because all too often Christians are 'peculiar' in the wrong way. The NEB translates, 'a people claimed by God for his own.' . . . In a Philadelphia museum you can see a pair of glasses that belonged to Thomas Edison. Their worth derives from ownership. We are people who belong to God."—Robert H. Mounce, *A Living Hope: A Commentary on 1 and 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 28, 29.

What Old Testament prophecy dealing with the covenant people does Peter apply to Christian believers? 1 Peter 2:10; Hosea 2:23.

**FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read what the New Testament teaches about believers as God's spiritual temple: 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:20-22; Heb. 3:6. Read "The Temple Cleansed Again," *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 589-600.

"In infinite wisdom, God chose the foundation stone, and laid it Himself. He called it 'a sure foundation.' The entire world may lay upon it their burdens and griefs; it can endure them all. With perfect safety they may build upon it. Christ is a 'tried stone.' Those who trust in Him, He never disappoints. He has borne every test. He has endured the pressure of Adam's guilt, and the guilt of his posterity, and has come off more than conqueror of the powers of evil. He has borne the burdens cast upon Him by every repenting sinner. In Christ the guilty heart has found relief. He is the sure foundation. All who make Him their dependence rest in perfect security."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 598, 599.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Am I a living stone in the spiritual house God is building? How can I tell whether my life is squaring up with the Cornerstone?
2. If I see myself as a member of God's modern covenant people, how can I reveal to the world the beauty of His character?
3. Peter teaches the priesthood of all believers. Why then does God ordain ministers with special functions in the church?
4. A fellow church member confides in you: "1 Peter 2:9 indicates that we should be holy. I am not holy. I have habits that are very unholy. How can I become holy?" What answer would you give? (See 1 Thess. 3:12, 13; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 12:10, 14.)

**SUMMARY:** Peter calls upon Christians everywhere to lay aside sin. They are to be building blocks in God's living temple, reflecting the glory of the Cornerstone. The followers of Jesus are the new Israel, the new-covenant people, bearing all the identifying spiritual characteristics that once were borne by Israel of old.

# Civic Responsibilities



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 2:11-20.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12).

**KEY THOUGHT.** As earthly representatives of the heavenly King, Christians are to introduce Jesus to everyone they meet by modeling His life in their own daily living.

**THE POWER OF EXAMPLE.** Brother Smith was the local elder of a small congregation in a New England town. The pastor had known him only as a faithful lay leader. From people who lived in the town he had heard that, prior to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist, Brother Smith had been a difficult man. One day the elder's wife told the pastor how her husband had once been thoroughly mean. But Jesus had changed his life completely. A few years after his baptism, his mother-in-law, deeply impressed by the changes in his life, gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized. Until her death, the mother-in-law maintained that it was the change she witnessed in her son-in-law's life that convinced her to surrender her life to the Saviour.

In the pastoral section beginning at 1 Peter 2:11, 12, Peter deals with the power for good that is radiated by a dedicated Christian life and with the duties of the Christian as a citizen.

**WARNING AGAINST THE FALLEN NATURE (1 Peter 2:11).**

**Why are Christians to war against "fleshly lusts"? 1 Peter 2:11.**

The word *flesh*, as Peter uses it here, stands for the fallen human nature that, for the believer, is controlled by the Holy Spirit. "Many regard this text as warning against licentiousness only; but it has a broader meaning. It forbids every injurious gratification of appetite or passion."—*Counsels on Diet and Foods*, p. 167. Fleshly lusts are the cravings of the fallen nature that seek satisfaction in sinful indulgences.

Paul spoke of the inner struggle of the born-again Christian: "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17, RSV).

The Christian believer is counseled: "Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16, RSV). If you choose to be "led by the Spirit" your life is kept in harmony with God's law (Gal. 5:18; compare Rom. 8:3, 4).

**How do we successfully war against the desires of our fallen, human natures? Rom. 7:25; 8:2, 12-14.**

There was a time when Paul was habitually giving in to the desires of his fallen self. (See Rom. 7:14, 18, 23.) Then he learned to depend on Christ for victory. Because of Christ's death, Paul could be delivered by the Spirit from yielding to the flesh.

**The fallen self still remains** after we submit to Christ, but now it is under the control of the Holy Spirit. "Paul's sanctification was a constant conflict with self. Said he: 'I die daily.' His will and his desires every day conflicted with duty and the will of God. *Instead of following inclination, he did the will of God, however unpleasant and crucifying to his nature.*"—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 299. (Italics supplied.)

**Three prayers.** When we are tempted to give in to our fallen humanity, we should immediately pray three prayers: (1) Lord, I am helpless; I like this thing. (You would not be tempted if you did not like it.) (2) But Lord, it is wrong. Please give me the victory over it. (3) Thank You, Lord; I believe You have given me the victory.

**In your warfare against your fallen humanity, are you having victory in Christ? If not, why not?**

**LIFE AMONG UNBELIEVERS (1 Peter 2:12).**

**What principle should control the manner in which Christians live among those who do not believe in Christ? 1 Peter 2:12.**

The Revised Standard Version translates the text: "Maintain good conduct among the Gentiles, so that in case they speak against you as wrongdoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

**God's chosen people.** In last week's lesson, we found that Peter went to great lengths to emphasize the New Testament teaching that believers in Jesus are now "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Peter 2:9, RSV). Therefore, they are to represent Him by a lifestyle consistent with His teachings.

The word translated "conversation" in the King James Version means "behavior" or "conduct." God's chosen people now are called to succeed where His Old Testament people failed. (See Rom. 2:24.) An honest lifestyle among our unbelieving neighbors will bring praise to our God.

**According to Jesus, what is the purpose of a consistent Christian lifestyle? Matt. 5:16.**

As Peter wrote his Epistle, Christians were being maligned by non-Christians, largely because they were misunderstood. Some of the accusations leveled against Christians that led to misunderstanding were these:

1. The Christians despised the Roman gods.
2. Christian exclusiveness demonstrated hatred for humanity.
3. The Lord's Supper was an occasion of immoral conduct.
4. Family relationships were tampered with.
5. Slaves were turned against their masters.
6. Disloyalty was shown toward Caesar and the state.

Peter was convinced that a consistent Christian lifestyle of good works would correct these misunderstandings and lead detractors to glorify God on "the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:12).

List the kinds of behavior by church members today that are sure to misrepresent the gospel. Now list the kinds of service in which church members can engage that will reduce prejudice. What is the ideal motive for these kinds of service?

**DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP (1 Peter 2:13, 14).**

What reason does Peter give for his counsel regarding a Christian's relationship to the state? 1 Peter 2:13, 14 (compare Rom. 13:1-7; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 509).

"Christians should acknowledge the sovereignty of the divine providence in ordering and overruling human institutions and relations for men's good. The way, therefore, to please God, to serve His will, and to experience His blessing, is for Christians not to be rebels against the prevailing order of society, but rather positively, submissively and dutifully to discharge the various responsibilities which the common relations of life put upon them."—Alan M. Stibbs, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, on 1 Peter (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 106.

**Jesus and the apostles never espoused political causes.** (See John 18:36.) The government of that day was thoroughly autocratic and often unjust. Even so, Jesus submitted to the rule of Caesar (Matt. 22:21), even allowing the Roman authorities to put Him to death.

**Under what circumstances did the apostles exercise nonviolent resistance to the decrees of rulers? Acts 5:27-32.**

The Bible teaches cooperation with civil authorities except when their requirements conflict with God's requirements. But Christians have no warrant for violent resistance.

**Balanced counsel.** "We are to recognize human government as an ordinance of divine appointment, and teach obedience to it as a sacred duty, within its legitimate sphere. But when its claims conflict with the claims of God, we must obey God rather than men. God's word must be recognized as above all human legislation. . . .

"We are not required to defy authorities. Our words, whether spoken or written, should be carefully considered, lest we place ourselves on record as uttering that which would make us appear antagonistic to law and order. We are not to say or do anything that would unnecessarily close up our way."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 69.

**In what circumstances do you think it appropriate for Christians to seek political change? Do you see a role in politics for church members? How can a Christian politician serve the state and, at the same time, be true to the gospel commission?**

**FREEDOM WITH RESPONSIBILITY (1 Peter 2:15-17).**

By what means are Christians encouraged to make their mark on society? 1 Peter 2:15.

Not by verbal or violent opposition to those of contrary political views are followers of Christ to make their mark. They have a more exalted mission, the glorification of the Saviour among mankind and the proclamation of salvation by His grace.

"For it is God's will that by doing right you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Peter 2:15, RSV).

**Here is plenty of scope for community involvement.** As believers we are not to be religious hermits, shutting ourselves away from an evil society. Unbelievers have spiritual, emotional, physical, and material needs. In the spirit of Jesus, we must be committed to alleviating human need wherever and whenever the opportunity presents itself.

**According to 1 Peter 2:16, what does it mean to be free?**

**Freedom is a state of mind.** "Were you a slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity. *For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 7:21, 22, RSV, italics supplied). Those in bondage to sinful people may have no outward freedom, but their hearts are free because of their union with Christ.

Those in bondage to sin and passion may think they are free; but, in fact, they are slaves. Those in bondage to God have the highest degree of freedom, as well as the peace that comes with the knowledge that they are accepted in the name of their Saviour. (See 1 Cor. 7:22.)

**Only the person in bondage to God is:**

1. free from cultural and racial prejudice and can relate to all human beings as the product of God's creation;
2. free from jealousy and the desire for supremacy and can love all believers as Jesus did;
3. free from superstition and the bondage of satanic error and can give to God the reverence due Him;
4. free from sloth and deceit and can render the best service.

**How are you using your Christian freedom in service for God and humanity?**

**PATIENCE WHEN MISTREATED (1 Peter 2:18-20).**

To what type of master might a Christian find himself subservient? 1 Peter 2:18.

**Servants and slaves in the Roman Empire.** Peter uses the Greek word for *slave* that refers to one who lives in the master's home as part of the family. This servant may be a freeman, a freewoman, or a bond slave.

There were millions of slaves in the Roman world in Peter's day. At first many were prisoners of war. In New Testament times, slaves included doctors, teachers, secretaries, musicians, and other professionally trained people. The early church probably saw many converts from this social group.

**Christian witness, not revolt.** Slavery was a reality that the early church had to face. New Testament counsel did not call for social revolt, but for lives consistent with the example of Jesus. Slaves could lead souls to Christ within their masters' households.

**How is a servant to behave under the hand of a harsh master?** 1 Peter 2:19, 20.

**Unfairness in the workplace.** Even when slavery does not exist, "numerous persons can testify that oppression nevertheless takes place today. They experience nonphysical oppression in the form of either verbal abuse or unethical rules and dishonest practices in their place of work. Quite often they cannot voice their grievances for fear of losing their source of income. Furthermore, oppression that is nonphysical usually is subtle and elusive, and generally cannot be proved. To all those who silently suffer in their place of employment Peter says, 'If you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is commendable before God.'"—Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary on 1 Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 107.

**Human conflicts need not destroy our fellowship with Christ.** "We should not allow feelings to be easily wounded. We are to live, not to guard our feelings or our reputation, but to save souls. As we become interested in the salvation of souls we cease to mind the little differences that so often arise in our association with one another. Whatever others may think of us or do to us, it need not disturb our oneness with Christ, the fellowship of the Spirit."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 485.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Consider the Bible counsel regarding patience in suffering: Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:17; Heb. 11:25; James 5:10; 1 Peter 5:10. Read "Meeting Opposition," *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 120-123; and *Sons and Daughters of God*, pp. 144-147.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION.** Peter calls Christians to an exemplary lifestyle in their communities. Give four areas in which you might improve your relations with the non-Adventist community in witnessing for Christ:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY:** We are strangers and pilgrims in a hostile world. In this antagonistic environment, the Christian is to weigh carefully the responsibility he bears to God in his relationships with neighbors, the government, immediate superiors, and those who mistreat him. The Christian's lifestyle is to teach others about God's love, patience, and compassion.



This quarter the IAD members are saving their money to give a liberal offering for the construction of new chapels in the Antillian Union and North Mexican Union. Support them on September 26th with a generous gift from the heart!



# Walking in His Footsteps



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 2:20-25.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Because Christ bore the punishment for our sins on the cross, He can pardon us, enable us to have victory, and strengthen us to suffer patiently for Him.

**THE DIVINE IMPERATIVE.** Paul A. Cedar introduces his study of this section of 1 Peter with this story: "Not long ago, I was leading a small group of professional people in a Bible study on the Book of James. Within that context, I shared a word study on the word 'faith' which is so central to the message of James. I contended that an appropriate Biblical definition for faith is 'active obedience,' and shared that God has called us to be His obedient servants. The initial response of those in the group was surprise and resistance.

"Like many of us, they had fallen into the self-centered lifestyle. They did not wish to be servants of anyone nor were they excited about the lifestyle of obedience. Instead they preferred for God to fall into the flow of their lives and to subscribe to their wishes.

"Of course, they were challenging one of the basic requirements of being a true Christian. To follow Jesus Christ as Lord in obedience and to serve Him is not an option for authentic Christian lifestyle; it is imperative."—*The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 148.

**CHRIST'S SINLESS EXAMPLE (1 Peter 2:21, 22).**

What two aspects of Christ's life are we urged to copy? 1 Peter 2:21, 22.

Some elementary classrooms display on the wall a ribbon of paper on which are printed the letters of the alphabet. Students copy the letters and thereby learn proper penmanship. The Greek word translated "example" suggests a child carefully reproducing an example. By His life, Jesus left behind examples of the manner in which He wants His followers to live. He demonstrated patience in suffering and freedom from all sin.

What divine standard is given in the following passages for those who would follow Jesus' example?

Rom. 6:4-13, 18, 22 \_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 2:5 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 3:3-9 \_\_\_\_\_

Rev. 3:21 \_\_\_\_\_

Victory over sin through the power of the indwelling Christ is a major emphasis throughout the New Testament. As Jesus overcame by relying upon His Father for strength, so we can overcome by relying upon Him. First Peter 2:22 repeats Isaiah 53:9; Isaiah predicted Christ's sinlessness, Peter beheld it. As there was no deceit or impurity in Jesus, so there will be none in the lives of His last-day sealed people. (Compare Rev. 7:3 with Rev. 14:1, 5.)

**We can become like Him.** "The path to heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. . . . Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom and to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? . . . Every association we form, however limited, exerts some influence upon us. . . . Thus by acquaintance and association with Christ we may become like Him, the one faultless Example."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 222, 223.

**Christlikeness should be our first priority in life. Is it yours?**

**CHRIST'S PATIENCE IN SUFFERING (1 Peter 2:23).**

**How did Jesus relate to unjust condemnation and abuse?  
1 Peter 2:23.**

"Peter now emphasizes the remarkable reserve of Jesus during the period of his final testing. The religious leaders . . . hurled their insults at him by placing a blindfold over his eyes, spitting at him, and striking him with their fists, while taunting him to 'prophesy!' (Mark 14:65; see also 15:31-32). The Roman soldiers crowned him with thorns and mocked him as king (Mark 15:17-20). Even those passing by the cross in the time of his agony reviled him (Mark 15:29-30). 'How did he respond? With dignified silence. He did not retaliate (see Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9). His cause was just: his suffering unjust. As the lamb of God he quietly bore the penalty for the sins of mankind. Even his tormentors were included within the circle of his forgiveness.'"—Robert H. Mounce, *A Living Hope*, pp. 36, 37.

**In reminding us of Christ's patience in suffering, what point does Peter want us to see? 1 Peter 2:20, 21.**

Some years ago a boy was stricken with polio that crippled his legs. Angry and bitter that his only son was afflicted in this way, the father took to drink and became an alcoholic. Life for his wife and boy became a veritable nightmare. The mother and son began to attend church, where they found Christ as Saviour and Lord.

One night when the drunken father had beaten his son harshly, he was impressed by the boy's patience. He asked the lad why he was acting so calmly. The boy replied, "It's because I love you, Daddy. God loves you, and so do I!"

Those words kept coming into the drunkard's mind. One evening, strongly convicted by the Holy Spirit, he blurted out to his son, "I want to love you and your mother and God! How can I do it?" That night the twelve-year-old boy led his father to Christ, and the dramatic, inevitable change came.—Adapted from Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 150.

**Have you ever seen someone's attitudes change because you have been patient and kind when abused?**

## CHRIST OUR SIN-BEARER (1 Peter 2:24, first part).

What message of Isaiah was repeated by Peter in 1 Peter 2:24? Isa. 53:4-6, 8, 10-12.

Christ did not come merely to show us how to die; He came to *save* us from death. This He did by taking our guilt upon Himself and suffering the penalty for it. The ultimate penalty for sin is eternal death. (See Rom. 6:23; Rev. 20:14.) Jesus suffered the equivalent of this death.

What do the following passages teach regarding the legal aspect of Christ's suffering on the cross?

1 John 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 4:10 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 9:28 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

The Greek word translated "propitiation" in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 is translated "expiation" in the RSV. In context, the word refers to the sin offering by which Christ bore the responsibility for the sins of the world.

Peter teaches that Christ "bore our sins in his body" (1 Peter 2:24, NIV). Because Christ assumed our guilt, His suffering was terminal. In fact, Christ's *physical* suffering was minor compared to the infinite agony involved in His separation from the Father.

**He suffered God's wrath against sin.** "Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart. The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. . . . But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 753.

**CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (1 Peter 2:24, second part).**

How do we "live unto righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24, second part)? Consider the following passages:

1 Cor. 1:30 \_\_\_\_\_

Phil. 3:9 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 3:21, 22 \_\_\_\_\_

Rom. 4:5 \_\_\_\_\_

**The Bible establishes these two major points:**

1. Christ's righteousness is placed to our account,
2. when we receive Him into our hearts by faith.

Martin Luther expressed it biblically when he wrote: "Therefore the Christ who is grasped by faith and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life."—*Luther's Works, Lectures on Galatians* (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia, 1963), vol. 26, p. 130.

God never counts sinners righteous who choose to remain in their sins. He says: "I will not justify the wicked" (Ex. 23:7). When He justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5), it is because the ungodly exercise faith in Him by surrendering their hearts to His control and indwelling. When Christ places His righteousness to the account of a repenting, believing sinner, He simultaneously comes into the heart of that believing soul and becomes his indwelling righteousness. (See *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 366, 397.)

**How does Christ bestow righteousness upon us? Rom. 8:9, 10; 1 John 2:29; 3:7.**

Christ's presence in the heart of the believer is manifested by the presence of the Holy Spirit. (See John 14:18.) When Christ by the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the heart of a person who exercises faith, that person then has indwelling righteousness. Christ is the person's righteousness within. The born-again Christian, upon whose heart the Holy Spirit has been bestowed, has the power to do works that in God's sight are righteous (1 John 2:29). This person is righteous as Christ is righteous (1 John 3:7) only because Christ, who is perfectly righteous, is dwelling in his or her heart by the Holy Spirit.

**CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD (1 Peter 2:25).**

What imagery does Peter use to emphasize our total dependence upon Christ? 1 Peter 2:25.

As sheep that go astray are entirely helpless, so are sinners who do not have Christ as their Shepherd and Bishop. They cannot extricate themselves from the pit of sin that is holding them. They are victims of the urges, impulses, and impressions that Satan, working through their fallen humanity, constantly thrusts upon them.

The Lord mourns because of the waywardness of His professed people. (See Jer. 50:6; compare Eze. 34:6.)

Jesus cared for the multitudes who came to Him. So today He cares for the masses of unsaved humanity. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36).

As our Shepherd and Bishop, what does Jesus do for us? Luke 15:3-7; John 10:1-16.

When we are lost, Jesus comes after us. However stormy the circumstances of our lives or complicating and binding the tentacles of sin, Jesus seeks us with infinite compassion. When we respond to His seeking, He places us upon His strong spiritual shoulders and carries us to the warmth and safety of the sheepfold.

Then He tenderly ministers to our wounds and leads us to peaceful grazing grounds and springs of living water. "He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. 40:11, RSV). What a Saviour!

Jesus is also our Bishop. The Greek word used in 1 Peter 2:25 means overseer, superintendent, guardian. Four times in the New Testament the word *bishop* is used to refer to the human ministers whom Jesus has appointed to care for His people. (See Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7.) But the Master Bishop, who vigilantly oversees the affairs of His church, is Jesus Himself.

Would you describe for your Sabbath School class how Shepherd Jesus delivered you from the power of sin?

**FURTHER STUDY:** Consider the following passages that refer to Christ as our sin-bearer: Isa. 53:5, 12; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; 9:28; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 3:5. Read "A Divine Sin Bearer" and "Justified by Faith," *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 308-310, 389-398.

**Christ bore our punishment.** "Through disobedience Adam fell. The law of God had been broken. The divine government had been dishonored, and justice demanded that the penalty of transgression be paid.

"To save the race from eternal death, the Son of God volunteered to bear the punishment of disobedience. Only by the humiliation of the Prince of heaven could the dishonor be removed, justice be satisfied, and man be restored to that which he had forfeited by disobedience. There was no other way."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 308.

**Living faith accepts Christ's control.** "When the soul lays hold upon Christ as the only hope of salvation, then genuine faith is manifested. This faith leads its possessor to place all the affections of the soul upon Christ; his understanding is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and his character is molded after the divine likeness. His faith is not a dead faith, but a faith that works by love, and leads him to behold the beauty of Christ, and to become assimilated to the divine character."—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 391, 392.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. On the basis of this week's lesson, how would you explain the relationship between the message of total victory over sin through Christ and the message of Christ's sealing of His last-day people?
2. How can a person who is reviled remain silent or react only with love?
3. Do you think it is possible for a person to be saved who does not believe that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins on the cross? What reason would you give?

**SUMMARY:** We are to follow in Christ's steps by being willing to suffer patiently as He did and by constantly depending upon Him for victory over sin. The basis of our salvation, His sacrifice on the cross, makes it possible for Him to bestow righteousness upon us by the Holy Spirit.

# To Love, Honor, and Cherish



*Sabbath Afternoon*

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 3:1-7.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Peter 3:7).

**KEY THOUGHT.** In the home, the relationship between husband and wife is to be one of understanding and tact. Because they are joint heirs of God's grace, respect and love are to motivate both husband and wife in all their interactions.

**"TENDER TIES THAT BIND.** The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is entered into intelligently, in the fear of God, and with due consideration for its responsibilities.

"Every home should be a place of love, a place where the angels of God abide, working with softening, subduing influence upon the hearts of parents and children."—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 18, 19.

There are few things that impact more upon the spiritual life of the Christian than the marital relationship. It can be a means of strengthening love and faith in God, or it can prove to be a heavy cross, crushing and destroying spiritual vitality. For this reason pointed counsel is given by the apostles Paul and Peter to both single and married persons. This week we will study counsel from the apostle Peter that has relevance for the entire family.

## THE ATTITUDE OF WIVES TO HUSBANDS (1 Peter 3:1).

What attitude should wives adopt toward their husbands?  
1 Peter 3:1.

**Willing cooperation is not blind subservience.** Keep in mind (1) the value God places upon a human life, (2) His gift of freedom to the human will, and (3) the context of 1 Peter 3:1-7.

**First, let us eliminate what Peter did not mean:**

1. Because Peter qualifies a submissive spirit with the words "your own husbands," he is not addressing the subject of the *status* of women in society. He is not saying that women must be subordinate to men.

2. He is not suggesting sexual, social, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual inferiority.

3. He is not suggesting that the wife is to submit herself to the sexual whims of a demanding husband. (See 1 Peter 3:7.) Nor is he saying that the wife is to submit herself to emotional or physical abuse.

The wife takes her place at the side of her husband, to support, encourage, and respect his role. The point of 1 Peter 3:1-7 is that a loving wife may succeed in winning an unbelieving husband, not by preaching, but by faithful fulfillment of her responsibilities as a wife.

What counsel did the apostle Paul give on the same subject?  
Col. 3:18; Eph. 5:22-25.

"The Bible plainly states that the husband is the head of the family. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.' [Col. 3:18.] . . . but we will read the conclusion of the same injunction, which is, 'As it is fit in the Lord.'

"God requires that the wife shall keep the fear and glory of God ever before her. Entire submission is to be made only to the Lord Jesus Christ, who has purchased her as His own child by the infinite price of His life. God has given her a conscience, which she cannot violate with impunity. Her individuality cannot be merged into that of her husband, for she is the purchase of Christ. It is a mistake to imagine that with blind devotion she is to do exactly as her husband says in all things, when she knows that in so doing, injury would be worked for her body and her spirit."—*The Adventist Home*, pp. 115, 116.

**WIVES OF UNBELIEVING HUSBANDS (1 Peter 3:1, 2).**

**What purpose does Peter give for wives' being in submission to their own husbands? 1 Peter 3:1.**

Peter was referring specifically to the situation in which the wife is a believer and the husband an unbeliever. (Compare 1 Cor. 7:10-16.)

As Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, converts came from either Jewish or pagan households. Some households were divided over religion. This division caused similar kinds of problem to those that arise today.

Simon Kistemaker points out: "In the middle of the first century, a wife was expected to profess the religion of her husband. If the husband adopted the Christian faith, his spouse would have to do so, too. But if the wife became a Christian, her husband would consider her unfaithful to him and his pagan religion. This caused tension in the home."—"Exposition of the Epistles of Peter and of the Epistle of Jude," in *New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1987), p. 118.

**Identify in the Scriptures some men and women who led their households to become Christians.**

Acts 10:1, 2, 44-48 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:14, 15 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:29-34 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Cor. 1:11, 16 \_\_\_\_\_

"Let your husband see the Holy Spirit working in you. Be careful and considerate, patient and forbearing. Do not urge the truth upon him. Do your duty as a wife should, and then see if his heart is not touched. Your affections must not be weaned from your husband. Please him in every way possible. Let not your religious faith draw you apart. Conscientiously obey God, and please your husband wherever you can."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 349. (Compare 1 Cor. 7:12-15.)

**Can you think of persons, whether married or single, whose resistance to truth was overcome by understanding, patience, and love? In what ways can the church support a person who is seeking to win an unbelieving spouse?**

## ADORNMENT FOR CHRISTIANS (1 Peter 3:3, 4).

What type of adornment will be most effective in catching the attention of your partner and impressing him or her with the quality of the Christian life? 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

God wants the character of each believer, whether married or single, "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). The person who receives Christ is now a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). The Holy Spirit brings the Christian progressively nearer to the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). This new person, who reflects the warmth of Christ's love and the purity of His character, wishes always to think, speak, and act like his Lord. Because Christ is living out His life through the individual (Gal. 2:20), the pattern of dress and conduct will be such that Christ respects.

The believers' dress should be respectable, modest, showing good judgment and self-control, revealing reverence for God.

What two principles enable us to define jewelry so that we can refrain from wearing it and displeasing our Lord? 1 Tim. 2:9, 10; Gal. 2:10 (compare Prov. 21:13).

**1. The adornment factor.** Christians are not to dress to attract attention to themselves. Neatness and beauty of appearance do not require adornment. Jewelry is intended to adorn and attract to oneself. It tends to encourage sinful pride. Hence, it conflicts with the "meek and quiet spirit," the beauty of character valued by Christ. Even the wearing of inexpensive jewelry contradicts the principle the apostles were teaching.

**2. The expense factor.** Jewelry is often expensive. How can a Christian spend money for unnecessary outward adornment while others live in abject poverty?

**Converted taste.** "The lesson applies to believers in every age. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' Matthew 7:20. The inward adorning of a meek and quiet spirit is priceless. In the life of the true Christian the outward adorning is always in harmony with the inward peace and holiness. . . . Evidence that the taste is converted will be seen in the dress of all who walk in the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord."—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 523.

Does your manner of dress always conform to Bible principles?

**EXAMPLES OF HOLY WOMEN (1 Peter 3:5, 6).**

The holy women of old adorned themselves with an appropriate spirit and thus became examples to be followed. Each occupied her place beside her husband, recognizing him as head of the home.

List some of the "holy women" whom Peter may have had in mind as examples for later generations.

Gen. 17:15-21 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 24:45, 46, 58, 59 \_\_\_\_\_

Gen. 29:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Ex. 2:1-10 \_\_\_\_\_

Ruth 1:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

What relationship with God identified the holy women spoken of in 1 Peter 3:5?

The lives of these godly women were not always above reproach. Nevertheless, they consistently served the Lord.

Peter used the Greek word translated "hoped" (RSV), "trusted" (KJV). These holy women of old kept alive the Messianic hope. Each one hoped that she would be the mother of the Deliverer. Her faith was centered in the Messiah to come, as ours is centered in the Christ who has come.

Why did Peter single out Sarah as a special example for Christian women? 1 Peter 3:6; Heb. 11:11, 12.

As Abraham is recognized by Paul as the father of those who have faith in God (Gal. 3:29), so Sarah is recognized by Peter as the mother of Christian women who are rich in good works and who have courageous hearts. Yet, Sarah did not always agree with Abraham. On at least one occasion, the Lord took Sarah's part against Abraham's will. (See Gen. 21:9-12.)

Why is it very wise for a husband to consider carefully the counsel of a Christian wife?

**HUSBANDS AND THEIR WIVES (1 Peter 3:7).**

What attitudes are husbands advised to adopt toward their wives? 1 Peter 3:7.

"Live together according to knowledge" is the literal meaning of what Peter wrote. This knowledge encompasses the whole range of marital experience. It means understanding and tact in dealing with each issue, one by one, as it arises in the relationship between husband and wife.

What did Peter mean by referring to the wife as the "weaker vessel"? 1 Peter 3:7.

The wife is to receive physical, emotional, and spiritual support from her husband. She may or may not be weaker in any of these areas; she may be stronger. The Lord designed marriage to involve a partnership in which the weaknesses of one partner are supplemented by the strengths of the other.

The counsel to husbands contained in 1 Peter 3:7 suggests that the entire passage applies equally to them. It is more likely that a wife can be lovingly submissive when her husband is loving and considerate. To love a wife "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25, RSV) is a great responsibility. Moreover, a wife is more likely to be modest and frugal in her manner of dress when her husband refrains from spending large amounts on flashy clothes and expensive "toys" for himself. She will relish her role as a wife if her husband considers her physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

What principle of salvation lies behind Peter's advice to husbands in 1 Peter 3:7? Gal. 3:28, 29.

In respect to salvation, God makes no distinction between male and female. We are all joint heirs of God's grace and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ. This fact, in itself, should provide husbands with the motivation to have great respect for their wives. This principle should lead every church member to give great respect to every other member of the congregation.

How does God treat the prayers of the husband who fails to love and honor his wife? 1 Peter 3:7 (compare Eph. 5:25-33).

**FURTHER STUDY:** Compare Paul's counsel in the following verses with Peter's counsel in this lesson: 1 Cor. 7:1-39; 11:1-16; 1 Tim. 2:8-12; 5:9; Eph. 5:21-33; Col. 3:18, 19; Titus 2:3-5.

**Authority to be exercised with humility and love.** "It is no evidence of manliness in the husband for him to dwell constantly upon his position as head of the family. It does not increase respect for him to hear him quoting Scripture to sustain his claims to authority. It will not make him more manly to require his wife, the mother of his children, to act upon his plans as if they were infallible. The Lord has constituted the husband the head of the wife to be her protector; he is the house-band of the family, binding the members together, even as Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the mystical body. Let every husband who claims to love God carefully study the requirements of God in his position."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 215.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. A young Christian woman is married to a man who thinks of her as inferior to himself, and who demands obedience to his wishes. She has smiled in public, but suffered deeply in private. Now she can bear no more and tells you of her pain. How will you minister to her? What if the husband refuses to acknowledge his need of help? What responsibility does the church have to guide this family to the help they need?
2. A husband is convinced his wife has been influenced by the feminist movement. She does not like housework. He thinks that because she has her own career and seems to take no interest in his, she wants to live her life independently of him. What counsel could you offer him?
3. Your teenage daughter loves jewelry and makeup. She insists on wearing earrings and necklaces, and paints her fingernails red. How would you relate to her? What needs may lie beneath her strong feelings on this issue? How might parents and the church winsomely lead her toward New Testament principles?

**SUMMARY:** Both the husband and the wife share equally the responsibility of making the marriage a success. The principles of kindness, empathy, and love that govern their relationship are the basis of happiness in all human relationships and of harmony within the church.

## Defend the Faith



### *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 3:8-22.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Christians are called to bear witness to their faith in all kinds of circumstances—friendly and hostile. Do not hesitate to let people know what inspires you with peace and joy in the present and with confidence in the future.

**THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL CAUSE AND EFFECT.** The street preacher harangued the noontime crowds as they hurried to restaurants. No one had time to stop and listen, because the noon lunch period was short. Periodically he interrupted his preaching with personal questions and comments addressed to passersby: "Sir, did you know that the wages of sin is death?" "Madam, if you give your heart to Jesus, you will find peace." A manicured gentleman dressed in a tweed suit commented as he hurried by, "Your technique is terrible, but your reasoning from cause to effect is flawless."

Jesus was the great proclaimer of spiritual cause and effect. For example, He said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1); "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 14:11).

Peter also deals with cause and effect. "Do not return evil for evil . . . that you may obtain a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9, RSV). "But even if you do suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed" (verse 14, RSV).

**BLESS AND BE BLESSED (1 Peter 3:8-12).**

Can you identify the one great principle that summarizes the five Christian characteristics listed in verse 8?

"Those who profess to be followers of Christ and are at the same time rough, unkind, and uncourteous in words and deportment have not learned of Jesus. A blustering, overbearing, fault-finding man is not a Christian. . . . Their sincerity may not be doubted; their uprightness may not be questioned, but sincerity and uprightness will not atone for a lack of kindness and courtesy."—*The Adventist Home*, p. 427.

**How is the Christian to respond to abuse? 1 Peter 3:9.**

Peter does not call Christians merely to patient endurance under abuse, but to an active response—rendering good for evil. He adds that rendering blessing for abuse is part of the Christian's calling. And there are rewards. The blessings of the eternal covenant between God and His people are for those who render good for evil.

"Even under false accusation those who are in the right can afford to be calm and considerate. God is acquainted with all that is misunderstood and misinterpreted by men, and we can safely leave our case in His hands. He will . . . surely vindicate the cause of those who put their trust in Him. . . . Those who are actuated by the spirit of Christ will possess that charity which suffers long and is kind."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 520.

List the ingredients Peter puts into his prescription for a happy and productive life. 1 Peter 3:10-12.

These verses can be considered a brief summary of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. (See Matt. 5:33-48.) Peter had heard Jesus' counsel in regard to pure speech and love for enemies. He had learned from hard experience that Jesus was right. Happiness is not measured in terms of the special treatment others give us, but in terms of the peace of Christ that reigns in our hearts.

Apply 1 Peter 3:8-12 to your own life. Is this your habitual way of life? If not, how do you think it can become so?

**DEFEND THE FAITH (1 Peter 3:13-17).**

**What will be the state of those who suffer for righteousness' sake? 1 Peter 3:13, 14.**

The Christian sufferer will be secure and blessed. Peter's point is that the innocent sufferer enjoys the special favor of God. Outward suffering, whether physical, economic, or even emotional, need not destroy our peace of mind or the vitality of our fellowship with Christ.

**What should God's people be prepared to do? 1 Peter 3:15.**

We "sanctify [reverence] the Lord God" in our hearts by giving Christ a place there that no one else is permitted to occupy. With kindness, gentleness, and respect, we are to explain to others why Christ has our first loyalty.

Peter's instruction on preparedness is set in the context of suffering abuse and persecution (verses 13-17). The defense of the Christian faith that Peter has in mind is before hostile questioners. As Peter penned these words, Christians were being brought before pagan judges and magistrates because of their religious faith. They were to be prepared to defend the gospel of Jesus by giving a forceful, but reverent, presentation of the reasons for their faith.

**According to Jesus, how are we qualified to give a defense of our faith? Matt. 10:19, 20?**

The preparation for an adequate defense of our faith is done day by day. Time spent with God's Word fixes its truths in the memory. Then when we are called upon to defend the hope that makes us what we are as a church, the Holy Spirit brings to mind what has been stored in the memory. But if preparation is not made today, tomorrow the memory will be blank when truth seeks a defender.

**The Revised Standard Version translates 1 Peter 3:16: "And keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." Can you testify to the truth of that statement? What personal experiences have you had that illustrate it?**

## THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL (1 Peter 3:18).

**"For Christ also died for sins once for all" (1 Peter 3:18, RSV). What is the significance of this statement?**

The heart of the gospel message is the fact that Christ died for our sins and rose again to be our living Saviour. Paul regarded this message "of first importance." (1 Cor. 15:3, RSV).

We have seen that Peter emphasized this truth earlier in his Epistle (1 Peter 2:24). Christ's innocent suffering is the best illustration of Peter's point that, where necessary, suffering for what is true and right is pleasing to God. (Compare 1 Peter 2:20 with 3:17.)

**Christ died "once for all" (1 Peter 3:18, RSV).** This truth is reiterated elsewhere in the New Testament. (See Heb. 7:27; 9:28; 10:10.) The once-for-all sacrifice of Christ rules out the idea that the celebration of communion involves a repetition of Christ's atoning sacrifice. Communion reminds us that the one sacrifice of Christ was sufficient for all sinners, for all time.

**The sacrifice was by "the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18, RSV). What does this tell us about the major reason for Calvary?**

Peter is saying in effect, "The righteous Christ died so that He could make us righteous." He says this in 1 Peter 2:24: "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." Even though Christ's one sacrifice on the cross was perfect and complete as a payment for the penalty of sin, His work for sinners did not stop there. Calvary made it possible for Christ to forgive our sins, and His resurrection enables Him to transform our lives, provided we are willing. Transformation of lives before the cross was in view of the sacrifice to be made; transformation after the cross is in view of the sacrifice that has been made.

**How does Jesus make repentant, confessing sinners righteous?** It is by grace, through faith (Eph. 2:8). His grace awakens faith in our hearts; then Christ, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, bestows righteousness upon us (Rom. 8:9, 10).

**How was Jesus raised to life? 1 Peter 3:18 (compare Rom. 10:9; John 10:17, 18). List the blessings that the resurrection of Christ brings to you.**

## JESUS AND THE SPIRITS IN PRISON (1 Peter 3:19, 20).

An understanding of the state of the dead affects one's interpretation of 1 Peter 3:19, 20. If there is a conscious state following death, then Jesus could preach to the imprisoned spirits of those who rejected the offer of God's grace through the preaching of Noah. Those who hold this view appeal to 1 Peter 4:6 to support their position: "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." But, since Scripture does not support consciousness in death, we must look for another meaning to the words of Peter.

**What do the following passages teach about death?** Matt. 9:18, 24; John 11:11 (compare 1 Cor. 15:6, 18-20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13; 2 Peter 3:4).

Without doubt, the Bible teaches that death is an unconscious state illustrated by sleep. Who then are the spirits in prison (1 Peter 3:19, 20)? They are not people who have died, for the dead are unconscious (asleep) and unable to hear the gospel's invitation.

**The explanation.** Adam Clarke offers the correct understanding of this passage when he says that the spirits in prison are "the inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who, having been disobedient, and convicted of the most flagrant transgressions against God, were sentenced by his just law to destruction. But their punishment was delayed to see if they would repent; and the long-suffering of God waited one hundred and twenty years, which were granted to them for this purpose; during which time, as criminals tried and convicted, they are represented as being 'in prison'—detained under the arrest of divine justice, which waited either for their repentance or the expiration of the respite, that the judgment pronounced might be inflicted."—*The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (New York: Abingdon, n.d.), vol. 6, p. 861.

**How did Jesus preach to these people?** "That the *Spirit of God* did *strive* with, convict, and reprove the antediluvian, is evident from Gen. vi.3. . . . And it was by this Spirit that Noah became a *preacher of righteousness* and *condemned* the ungodly world."—Clarke, p. 861.

Compare Noah's day with ours. Are unbelievers "in prison" today? What does God do for them?

**THE MEANING OF BAPTISM (1 Peter 3:21, 22).**

**How do you understand Peter's statement that baptism saves us? 1 Peter 3:21.**

The Revised Standard Version translates the text: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." The Bible does not teach that there is saving virtue in the rite of baptism. Baptism *symbolizes* death to sin and resurrection to new life by the new-birth experience. Only the death and resurrection of Jesus make this experience possible. Peter makes it clear in 1 Peter 3:20 that eight souls were saved by being in the ark. They were saved by God. The water was the means God used to separate them from the evil world that was perishing in the deluge. Hence, the statement "eight souls were saved by water" is metaphoric. The water symbolized the salvation provided by God.

**How are we saved? Eph. 2:8. What is the relationship of water baptism to salvation? Rom. 6:1-7.**

The statement, "Baptism . . . now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21, RSV), is a metaphor. The waters of baptism symbolize the means by which believers are separated from this present evil world that is soon to perish. Peter's point (in 1 Peter 3:20-22) is that, just as the waters of the Flood symbolized God's saving mercy in separating Noah and his family from the evils of their world, so baptism symbolizes God's saving grace for those who accept Christ today.

People are not saved by being washed in water, but by having their consciences purified by divine power (1 Peter 3:21, 22).

**What are the special advantages to us that Christ "is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God" (1 Peter 3:22)? Heb. 9:11-15 (compare Heb. 7:24, 25; Heb. 8:1, 2; 1 Tim. 2:5).**

There could be no forgiveness of sin without the high priestly mediatorial ministry of Jesus Christ. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Because Christ is now our "high priest of good things to come" (Heb. 9:11), He is able to purge our consciences from sin and enable us to serve God (verse 14).

**FURTHER STUDY:** On the question of rendering good for evil read: Ex. 23:5; Prov. 25:21; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20; 1 Thess. 5:15. Read the following chapters: "Religion in the Daily Life," *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 360-371; "Christian Forbearance" and "Brotherly Love," *Testimonies*, vol. 5, pp. 331-336, 167-177.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Because death, like sleep, is a state of unconsciousness, how would you explain Paul's meaning in Philippians 1:21-23?
2. In the light of the preceding explanation of 1 Peter 3:19, 20, how would you explain 1 Peter 4:6?
3. Because Christ gives us His righteousness now by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9, 10), why should we be concerned about growing in holiness? (See 2 Peter 3:18.)
4. Peter's counsel about patient endurance in times of persecution seems to refer to suffering inflicted by those who are not believers in Christ. Suppose you are unjustly treated by a fellow church member. How would you relate to that? Does the Bible speak to this issue?

**SUMMARY:** There is a spiritual law of cause and effect. Peter appeals to this law when he tells us to render good for evil. As God's remnant, we inherit the covenant blessings when by faith we follow Peter's counsel. Because Jesus died and rose again, He is able to function as our High Priest. His purifying work in our hearts separates us from sin and prepares us to share eternity with Him.

## Victory and Service



### *Sabbath Afternoon*

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Peter 4:1-11.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1).

**KEY THOUGHT.** The suffering and death of Christ enable the Christian to gain victory over sin. The liberated Christian no longer lives as a slave to sinful passion, but according to God's will.

**THE BEST-LAID PLANS.** An American sailor reminisced about the warm tropical evenings spent with his fellow seamen on the deck of a ship in the South Pacific during World War II. Each evening the conversation would turn to the fear that lurked in the mind of each man—the possibility of being torpedoed. Each sailor knew that at any given moment the alarm could be sounded, followed by a deafening explosion. Each sailor detailed for the others what he would do if the ship were torpedoed. Then one night the alarm sounded, followed by the explosion. Recalling the mass confusion, the sailor said that not one did what he had said he would do.

There is a reverse parallel to this experience for Christians. God has issued instructions that will enable His people to move in unison through the explosive events that will end the history of this world. Those who heed these instructions will find in God a refuge in the time of need. Some of these instructions are dealt with by Peter in this week's lesson.

## DEATH TO SIN (1 Peter 4:1).

For whom did Christ suffer in the flesh? 1 Peter 4:1.

This statement is a continuation of the thought Peter presented in 3:18. In that verse he speaks of Jesus' suffering and death. Therefore, when Peter speaks of Jesus' suffering in 4:1, he is directing our attention to Jesus' death. In view of His death for sinners, His followers are to arm themselves with a similar frame of mind—a willingness to die. As Jesus "suffered in the flesh" (died), so we must be willing to suffer in the flesh (die).

**Two kinds of death.** Obviously the person who has died physically has "ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1). But the next verse (1 Peter 4:2) indicates that Peter is speaking of a person who goes on living as having died to sin. He lives "for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer by human passions but by the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2, RSV). Jesus died *for* sin; the believer dies *to* sin.

What type of death on the part of the sinner will place him in a position where he will not continue to live a sinful life? Rom. 6:1-7.

**Paul and Peter are of one mind.** When Peter says, "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin," he is conveying the same truth that Paul teaches when he says, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? . . . For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin" (Rom. 6:3-7, NIV). "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3, NIV).

**"The old sinful life is dead;** the new life entered into with Christ by the pledge of baptism. Practice the virtues of the Saviour's character. . . . The sins that were practiced before conversion, are to be put off, with the old man. With the new man, Christ Jesus, are to be put on 'kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.'"—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 300. The fallen nature still remains after the death of the "old man," which is the life we used to live before we found Christ. (See Eph. 4:22-24, 1 Cor. 9:27.)

Can you honestly say that the "old man," your old life of habitual sinning, is dead? How do you know?

**ALIVE TO GOD (1 Peter 4:2, 3).**

According to Peter, what change will take place in the life of the sinner who has suffered and died with his Lord? 1 Peter 4:2, 3.

Again Peter and Paul are in agreement. Compare Paul's statement in Romans 6:13. The apostles wished their readers to understand that when they accept Jesus there follows a turning away from the old lifestyle.

What is God's will for us in our battle against sin? Romans 6:12, 14; Phil. 2:12, 13.

The root of the sin problem is our fallen human nature. This nature is shared by all Adam's children. We are born with it. At any stage in our experience, insofar as we fail to appropriate the power of Christ, we are "carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). Even after Paul's conversion the daily battle with the propensities of his fallen self continued. (See 1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 5:16, 17.) This legacy from Adam is always present, urging us on to do and say things that we know are wrong.

So that sin should not reign in our mortal bodies, our fallen nature must be continually subdued and controlled. But how? John 15:7; Rom. 8:2.

"The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness."

"What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. . . . You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 43, 47.

What practical steps do you go through when you are tempted? Are they effective? Why?

**THE END IS AT HAND (1 Peter 4:4-7).**

What is Peter's teaching about a coming judgment? Who is brought to judgment in the instance that Peter is speaking of? 1 Peter 4:4, 5.

Followers of Christ are often ridiculed by those who are living for the here and now. Those who reject the opportunity of salvation will be subject to judgment and retribution at the coming of Jesus. (See 2 Tim. 4:1.)

**Who are the dead to whom the gospel is preached? 1 Peter 4:6.**

The verse does not refer to the preaching of the gospel to dead people. The Greek verb is past tense: "The gospel *was preached* even to the dead" (1 Peter 4:6, RSV). *It was preached to them while they were still living.* The purpose of the preaching was that, though they would remain subject to death like the rest of humanity, they would have the privilege of living spiritually because of fellowship with God.

**To what climax of history does Peter direct our attention? What is the basis of his call for earnest prayer? 1 Peter 4:7; Acts 2:16, 17.**

Peter spoke of the second advent of our Lord as being near. He could point to several evidences to support his faith. For example, the Messiah had come, the Holy Spirit had been given, the gospel was being preached throughout the known world, and scoffers were ridiculing the idea of coming judgment. Peter spoke with assurance about the nearness of the end. He tells us to get the things of this life in their proper perspective.

**Make a list of fulfilled prophecies from Daniel, Revelation, Jesus' sermons, and any other inspired sources that give evidence of the soon return of Jesus—prophecies that could not be used by Peter because they had not been fulfilled in his day.**

**What is to be the lifestyle of those who are expecting the soon return of Jesus? 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3:11-14.**

**UNFAILING LOVE (1 Peter 4:8, 9).**

Describe the relationship that early Christians had with one another. 1 Peter 4:8, 9.

**Love for the brethren.** The word that is translated "charity" (KJV) means "love." Love permeated the experience of the apostolic church and helped to make Christianity attractive to Jews and Gentiles alike. Because God wished this experience to continue, He moved decisively against the greed and deception of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). If their greed had not been checked in a decisive way, it could have stifled true love among the believers.

**A prerequisite for the "latter rain."** This love is essential for believers who wish to receive the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the "latter rain." "Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

**In what way does love cover a multitude of sins? 1 Peter 4:8.**

Love does not excuse sin, but where love reigns, people are willing to forgive and forget the sins of others. When the disciples of Jesus came to love one another, they received the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

**Why would Peter instruct his readers to provide hospitality ungrudgingly? 1 Peter 4:9.**

The early Christian church had many poor members. Initially wealthy believers shared material things with those who had need. (See Acts 2:44, 45.) Evidently, as time went by, this practice was not continued in the same spirit of spontaneous generosity. Peter wanted to see his midcentury brethren and sisters enjoying the same joyous fellowship that had blessed the first believers. Preachers needed support as they devoted themselves to the ministry.

Does a true spirit of love reign in your local church? If not, what can you do to improve the situation?

**STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE (1 Peter 4:10, 11).**

By what means are we enabled to function as good stewards of God's grace? 1 Peter 4:10.

Love in action for others is a key element in stewardship. This involves working for them in various ways, lifting their burdens, and, where possible and appropriate, assisting them materially.

What two kinds of ministry does Peter indicate should be given in the church so that God can be glorified? 1 Peter 4:11.

Ministry of the Word by elders and practical ministry by deacons were instituted by God in the apostolic church. (See Acts 6:1-7.) But the work of these appointed ministers was supplemented by the witnessing and welfare ministry of the laity.

**God's instruction to His last-day church.** "I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read this chapter carefully and understand the kind of ministry that will bring life into the churches. The work of the gospel is to be carried by means of our liberality as well as by our labors. When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it to them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ's ministry. The Master's holy work was a benevolent work. Let our people everywhere be encouraged to have a part in it. . . .

"The fast which God can accept is described. It is to deal thy bread to the hungry and to bring the poor which are cast out to thy house. Wait not for them to come to you. The labor rests not on them to hunt you up and entreat of you a home for themselves. You are to search for them and bring them to your house. You are to draw out your soul after them. You are with one hand to reach up and by faith take hold of the mighty arm which brings salvation, while with the other hand of love you reach the oppressed and relieve them. It is impossible for you to fasten upon the arm of God with one hand while the other is employed in ministering to your own pleasure."—*Welfare Ministry*, pp. 29-31.

Does your local church have a program of ministering to the poor and homeless in your community? What is your personal contribution to welfare ministry?

**FURTHER STUDY:** Note how we are to put away the "works of the flesh." Study Galatians 5:16-24. Read the chapter "Repentance" in *Steps to Christ*, pp. 23-36. Also read "Isaiah 58—A Divine Prescription" in *Welfare Ministry*, pp. 29-34.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. From our study of 1 Peter 4:1-11, there seems to be a definite relationship between the spiritual state of believers and their capacity to render service for others. How would you explain that relationship?
2. A single mother in your church is struggling to support her family. She would like to send her children to church school. What can you do to help her?
3. Young people in your community have an earnest desire to attend an Adventist college. They do not have the needed money, despite their hard work. Can you help? Will you help?
4. What is your church doing to help aged members of the flock who cannot afford to live in a nursing home? Do you have a program for helping them? Are those who cannot attend church visited regularly?
5. Obviously the church cannot solve everyone's financial problems. What can be done by your church to help people improve their health and happiness? What about cooking classes, weight-loss programs, marriage-enrichment programs, health seminars? What more do you think local churches can do than they are doing now in community service?

**SUMMARY:** As we come to Christ, we die to sin, are buried in baptism, and rise with Him in newness of life. The "old man" of sin, the old lifestyle, is left behind. Our fallen human natures are brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ, provided we are willing to surrender our wills to Him. As we near the end of this world's history, we are to depend upon Christ to live His life in us, and to prepare to render an account for our stewardship of His grace.

# Suffering and the Christian



## *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 4:12-19.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Peter 4:12).

**KEY THOUGHT.** Suffering can be understood correctly only as we grasp the significance of the great controversy between good and evil and its implications for Christians.

**WHY SUFFERING?** An emaciated figure of a man sat under a tree in a grove at Uruvela, India. He had been living on a single fruit per day. His limbs looked like the knotted joints of withered creepers, his spinal cord like twists in a rope, and his eyes, sunken into their sockets, looked like deep pools of water. When he placed his hand upon his stomach, he could almost feel his backbone. Thus Gautama—the Buddha—described himself as he sought enlightenment by self-mortification. He was wrestling with one of the greatest problems that philosophers and religious thinkers have ever faced—human suffering and its cause. (Based on John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, third ed. [New York: MacMillan Company, 1956], pp. 172, 173.)

The Word of God has drawn the veil aside so that this problem can be understood. Ellen White's *Conflict of the Ages* series presents the cosmic struggle of the ages—the great controversy between Christ and Satan. As a result, Seventh-day Adventist Christians can better understand the whys and wherefores of suffering and death.

**FIERY TRIALS (1 Peter 4:12).**

What experiences in the life of a Christian are not to be looked upon as if they were something strange? 1 Peter 4:12.

This is the third time the apostle Peter deals with the problem of suffering. In his first treatment of the subject (1 Peter 2:18-25), he deals with the abuse servants and slaves sometimes suffer at the hands of their masters. Jesus, the patient Sufferer, is held up as the great model to be followed. In the second treatment (1 Peter 3:13-17), Peter explains how one who suffers for righteousness' sake is blessed. In this week's lesson, Peter assures his readers that if they suffer together with Jesus, they will also be glorified together with Him.

Who is behind all of the hardship and trials that the Christian faces in life? 1 Peter 5:8.

As a prowling lion, Satan stalks every sinner who accepts Jesus. Through trial and suffering, he attempts to bring discouragement and doubt upon Jesus' followers as a means of separating them from their Lord. If they patiently maintain their trust in Jesus, the instruments designed to destroy them will be turned into a blessing.

**"Trial is part of the education given in the school of Christ, to purify God's children from the dross of earthliness. It is because God is leading His children that trying experiences come to them. Trials and obstacles are His chosen methods of discipline, and His appointed conditions of success."**—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 524.

"The fact that we are called upon to endure trial proves that the Lord Jesus sees in us something very precious, which He desires to develop. If He saw in us nothing whereby He might glorify His name He would not spend time in refining us. We do not take special pains in pruning brambles. Christ does not cast worthless stones into His furnace. It is valuable ore that He tests.

"The blacksmith puts the iron and steel into the fire that he may know what manner of metal they are. The Lord allows His chosen ones to be placed in the furnace of affliction in order that He may see what temper they are of and whether He can mold and fashion them for His work."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 214.

In what ways have the trials of your life proved a blessing?

**SUFFERING FOR CHRIST'S SAKE (1 Peter 4:13, 14).**

Why should Christians not think it strange that fiery trials come upon them? John 15:18, 19.

**The servant is not above his Lord.** Those who choose to be followers of Jesus may expect to be treated as He was treated. This fact can be understood only in the light of the great controversy. Jesus and His followers are seen by Satan as an offense.

**"The world loves sin, and hates righteousness,** and this was the cause of its hostility to Jesus. All who refuse His infinite love will find Christianity a disturbing element. The light of Christ sweeps away the darkness that covers their sins, and the need of reform is made manifest. While those who yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit begin war with themselves, those who cling to sin war against the truth and its representatives.

"Thus strife is created, and Christ's followers are accused as troublers of the people. But it is fellowship with God that brings them the world's enmity. They are bearing the reproach of Christ."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306.

Peter was writing to Gentile converts who had never been persecuted for their religious beliefs. Peter points them to the bright side of the whole experience.

**Why are Christians to rejoice in suffering? 1 Peter 4:13, 14; Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:17.**

Christians may rejoice when they suffer for Christ's sake, not because they appreciate suffering, but because they know that conflict with Satan and sin always involves opposition. Believers in Christ have aligned themselves with His plan to win lost souls. Therefore they are the object of Satan's attacks. Their joy and peace result from awareness of the righteousness of Christ's cause.

**"In this life we must meet fiery trials** and make costly sacrifices, but the peace of Christ is the reward. There has been so little self-denial, so little suffering for Christ's sake, that the cross is almost entirely forgotten. We must be partakers with Christ of His sufferings if we would sit down in triumph with Him on His throne."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 215.

Can you tell of specific occasions when focus on Christ's suffering gave you courage for your daily struggle?

## SIN INVITES SUFFERING (1 Peter 4:15, 16).

Why were the apostles calm and confident when confronted by threats and beatings by the Sanhedrin? Acts 5:40-42.

The apostles were consciously innocent and wholly committed to Christ's cause. They did not permit persecution to dampen their evangelistic zeal. In the face of beatings and the threat of death, they preached and worked more fervently than before. Do we have the courage to do what they did?

"So long as we choose the easy path of self-indulgence and are frightened at self-denial, our faith will never become firm, and we cannot know the peace of Jesus nor the joy that comes through conscious victory. The most exalted of the redeemed host that stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, clad in white, know the conflict of overcoming, for they have come up through great tribulation. Those who have yielded to circumstances rather than engage in this conflict will not know how to stand in that day when anguish will be upon every soul, when, though Noah, Job, and Daniel were in the land, they could save neither son nor daughter, for everyone must deliver his soul by his own righteousness."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 215.

**Four truths stand out.** As we think through what Peter says, the following four points stand out: (1) The followers of Jesus will not escape persecution and trials. (2) Trials and suffering will test the spirituality of every Christian. (3) By our suffering for Christ and what He represents, we share in His suffering. (4) We will share Christ's glory if we endure to the end.

**Although we are not to be ashamed when we suffer as Christians, what causes of suffering are we strenuously to avoid?** 1 Peter 4:15.

The word rendered "busybody in other men's matters" (KJV) and "mischief-maker" (RSV) appears nowhere else in all ancient Greek literature. Literally the word implies "looking into that which belongs to another." Peter is advising Christians to stay out of other people's personal affairs.

**When you have suffered because of your own sins or mistakes, what gave you courage to carry on?**

**JUDGMENT OF PROFESSED BELIEVERS (1 Peter 4:17).**

Because Peter believed that Christ's death and resurrection introduced the last era of human history (1 Peter 1:20; 4:7), he was confident that the time of judgment had also arrived. Throughout the Christian era God has determined who belong to Christ and who do not. This fact does not rule out the reality of the heavenly investigative judgment in the last days. Repenting Israelites were judged forgiven throughout the year (Lev. 4:26, 31, 35). But not until the Day of Atonement did the final judgment of the year occur, which involved cleansing of both sanctuary and people. (See Lev. 16:29-34; compare Dan. 7:9-14; 8:14.)

**Where does the judgment begin? 1 Peter 4:17; Eze. 9:4-11.**

In Ezekiel 9:5, 6, those who were sealed were judged worthy of life. Those who were slain at the sanctuary were in a state of incurable rebellion. (See Rev. 7:1-3.) In the pre-advent, investigative judgment, God's people are acquitted (Dan. 12:1; compare Rev. 3:5). Those who have rejected Christ's mercy are judged later.

**Ellen White sets 1 Peter 4:17 in the context of the pre-advent, investigative judgment:** "In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. 'Judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?' 1 Peter 4:17."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 480.

**What is our role in determining the outcome for us of the pre-advent, investigative judgment? Rev. 3:5; 19:7, 8.**

The robe of Christ's righteousness is given to the believer by the Holy Spirit in the new-birth experience. (See Heb. 8:9, 10; 1 John 2:29; 3:7.) This is Christ's transforming gift of grace to the one who has faith. (See Eph. 2:8-10.) The overcomer retains this gift by maintaining daily fellowship with Jesus, and he is acquitted in the pre-advent judgment by the decision of the heavenly court to retain his name eternally in the book of life.

**JUDGMENT OF THE LOST (1 Peter 4:17-19).**

At what point in the history of the great controversy are the records of the wicked examined? When is the verdict pronounced? Rev. 20:4, 11-15 (compare Matt. 25:41-46).

Those who have never had their names placed in the book of life, because they have never accepted Christ, and those who have their names removed, because they do not retain their robe of righteousness (Dan. 12:1; Rev. 3:5) are judged during the millennium while they are in their graves. (See Rev. 19:19-21; 20:1-4.) At the end of the millennium the wicked are raised from the dead (Rev. 20:5) to receive their sentence of eternal death (Rev. 20:11-15).

"The whole wicked world stand arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 668.

In view of the judgment, to whom does Peter admonish his readers to commit their souls? 1 Peter 4:19.

**Committing oneself to God involves active well-doing.** "The Greek verb translated 'should commit' [1 Peter 4:19, NIV] is informative. In classical literature it was used of turning over money to a friend for safekeeping. There were no banks in ancient times, so a person leaving home for an extended period would want to place his coins in the custody of someone he could trust. To break such a trust was a serious offense. Sufferers may place their lives in God's hands with full assurance that he will guard the deposit with the greatest of care. The same verb is used of Jesus on the cross when he called out in a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit' (Luke 23:46). . . .

"Committing oneself to God is not passive submission. It involves active well-doing. While believers will certainly endure the hostility of an unbelieving world, there is no place for a martyrdom mentality. Suffer in silence but get on with the job of living an active life of good deeds."—Robert H. Mounce, *A Living Hope* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 78, 79.

What does the message of the judgment do for you spiritually?

**FURTHER STUDY:** On the subject of the pre-advent judgment, compare: Dan. 7:9-14; 8:9-14; 12:1; Rev. 3:5; 6:9-11. Read the chapter "Facing Life's Record" in *The Great Controversy*, pp. 479-91.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Distinguish between the trials and suffering that you have brought upon yourself because of poor judgment and the trials you suffer because you are a living witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. What inconvenience are you willing to suffer for the name of Jesus?
3. How do you view the judgment? Do you look upon it as an event to be feared or as a vindication of your faith and trust in Jesus? What does this week's lesson suggest should be our attitude to the judgment?

**SUMMARY:** Because human beings have become the focal point of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, the person who accepts Christ is destined to suffer Satan's wrath. God uses the afflictions experienced in this controversy to mold our characters, while He sets limits on the extent to which Satan can harass His people. In the judgment, God acquits those who have put their faith in Him. Those who have refused His mercy are condemned.

## Final Exhortations



### *Sabbath Afternoon*

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** 1 Peter 5:1-14.

**MEMORY TEXT:** "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:6, 7).

**KEY THOUGHT.** The years of Christian warfare had taught Peter to cast all his cares upon Jesus. In the words of our memory text, Peter expresses optimism and confidence. He invites each of us to share his experience of humbling himself before God, casting all our cares upon Jesus.

**A WORD TO UNDERSHEPHERDS.** The apostle Peter shows a deep concern that the leaders of God's flock shepherd His people for proper motives. How easy it is for people with selfish motives to fleece the sheep and make themselves fat while those over whom they watch sacrifice for the work of God! Capturing the spirit of Peter's words, Adam Clarke, in his commentary on 1 Peter 5:3, reproves the leaders of churches who selfishly lord it over their flocks. He warns of God's wrath toward shepherds who dare to enrich themselves at the expense of God's people. Then he admonishes the pastor: "Preacher or minister, whosoever thou art, who readest this, apply not the word to thy neighbour, whether he be state-appointed, congregation-appointed, or self-appointed; take all to thyself. . . . See that thy *own* heart, views, and conduct be right with God."—Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, p. 868.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF ELDERS (1 Peter 5:1).**

**"Feed my sheep."** As Peter prepared to bring his Epistle to a close, he remembered the commission of the Good Shepherd, "Feed my sheep" (John 21:16). He passed on the charge of the Good Shepherd to those who are called by God to be under-shepherds.

**How did Peter look upon the relationship between himself and other "elders" within the early church? 1 Peter 5:1.**

The Greek word for "elder" (*presbuteros*) identifies a person who has advanced through the years of life and with the accumulated wisdom that this experience brings is worthy of honor and respect. The term also is used for persons who hold positions of trust, and who deserve respect by virtue of their position. In 1 Peter 5:1, Peter is addressing church leadership. (Compare Titus 1:5.)

Although Peter's position as a leader among the original 12 apostles of Jesus would bring to him great honor and respect, he refers to himself as a "fellow elder" (RSV). He did not speak of himself as being above those who carried the responsibilities of leadership.

**Besides being a fellow elder, what else does Peter tell his readers about himself? 1 Peter 5:1.**

Peter saw some of the physical abuse that Jesus endured at the hands of His enemies. How could he ever forget that battered and bruised face smeared with blood as Jesus turned to look him in the eye when he had said, "I know not the man" (Matt. 26:74)! After his conversion, Peter testified from Jerusalem to Rome of the suffering Jesus had borne so that repentant sinners could go free.

Peter was one of three privileged disciples who not only looked forward to the time when they will share the glory of their returning Lord, but who had already enjoyed a foretaste of this experience. Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus, and were allowed to share, even if but for a moment, in the glory that will attend Him as He comes to gather His waiting people from all generations of time. (See Matt. 17:1-8.)

**Are ministers the only ones called to feed God's flock? What responsibilities do members of the church have for one another?**

## THE CALL TO SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP (1 Peter 5:2-4).

What is Peter's first charge to all future undershepherds? 1 Peter 5:2. What do you understand this charge to mean?

The word here rendered "feed" also means "to tend." Peter commissions the undershepherds to tend the flock of God, which, of course, includes the responsibility to see that the flock is properly fed. However, the responsibilities go beyond feeding.

List the remaining charges given by Peter to future undershepherds. 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

The word translated "filthy lucre" (KJV) or "shameful gain" (RSV) in verse 2 depicts a "mean" person who has selfish motives for service.

"Think of the difference in the effectiveness of our ministry if we are ministering with eagerness, initiative, and enthusiasm as opposed to doing it simply because we have to or because we are seeking personal gain or recognition. It is the difference between a boy carrying out the garbage because his mother ordered him to do it and that same boy playing baseball because he wants to do it.

"We need to serve the flock of God not for monetary gain, but eagerly!"—Paul A. Cedar, *The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984), p. 191.

Peter also warns undershepherds not to lord it over God's heritage.

"Let no one suppose that God has given to men the power of ruling their fellow-men. He will accept the service of no man who hurts and discourages Christ's heritage."—Ellen G. White Comments, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1149.

What will the faithful undershepherd receive from the Chief Shepherd? 1 Peter 5:4 (compare 1 Cor. 9:25; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; Rev. 4:10).

Apart from the desire for money, what other motives do you see as selfish? What help is available to those who need and long for higher motives? How can what seems to be drudgery ever become interesting and exciting?

**BE HUMBLE, BE VIGILANT (1 Peter 5:5-8).**

**Why is the younger generation urged to be submissive? 1 Peter 5:5.**

The word *elder* refers to church leadership in verse 1. In verse 5 it is used for older persons.

**Who else, besides the younger generation, is to be submissive? How are the followers of Jesus to be clothed? Why? 1 Peter 5:5-7.**

**Prescription for a happy church.** Peter speaks quite often about a submissive attitude. For example, we are to submit to the ordinances of man (1 Peter 2:13) if they do not contradict the commands of God. Servants are to obey their masters (1 Peter 2:18). Wives are to be subject to their own husbands (1 Peter 3:1-5). Angels, authorities, and powers are subject to Jesus (1 Peter 3:22). The younger generation are to submit to their elders (1 Peter 5:5). And all are to be subject to one another. If all followed Peter's counsel, we would have a peaceful, happy church.

**Clothed with humility.** The word here rendered "clothed" depicts an outer garment that is secured with a knot—for example, an apron. Jesus put on such a garment when He humbled Himself and washed the disciples' feet. The Greek may also refer to a "stole-like garment that was the sign of honor and pre-eminence." The apron of humility becomes a garment of honor for Christ's servants. Paul A. Cedar observes, "Many would be scantily clad if clothed in their humility."—*The Communicator's Commentary: James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*, p. 194.

**Why is the Christian to be vigilant? 1 Peter 5:8 (compare Rev. 12:12, 17).**

"Satan assailed Christ with his fiercest and most subtle temptations, but he was repulsed in every conflict. Those battles were fought in our behalf; those victories make it possible for us to conquer. Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 510.

**ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH (1 Peter 5:9-11).**

**How can the devil be defeated by the Christian? 1 Peter 5:9; James 4:7; Rev. 12:11.**

Satan is beaten when we submit to Christ and resist temptation. We are to be "steadfast in the faith." Peter is speaking not only of faith in Christ but of being established in the faith, the teaching of Scripture. He is emphasizing the importance of sound doctrine. The presence of the definite article, *the*, makes the abstract noun, *faith*, concrete. The acceptance of solid Christian doctrine can form a shield against the attacks of the "roaring lion."

**What is one good motive Peter gives for being steadfast in the faith? 1 Peter 5:9.**

The inward battle against sin is common to all followers of Christ. Outward opposition to our faith, in one form or another, is always present. To withdraw from the struggle in discouragement is to fail Jesus and our fellow believers in other parts of the world.

**What does God undertake to do for those who have suffered for His cause? 1 Peter 5:10.**

"Peter now sets forth a fourfold promise. God will *restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast*. . . . The first term (restore) is used in several contexts. In Mark 4:21 it is used of mending nets. In 1 Corinthians 1:10 it describes the joining together of members of a church in view of pending disunity. . . . It means to repair so as to place back into service. Suffering may take its toll, but God will restore. He will repair the 'damage' and fit us for continued service.

"The second term means to establish and make solid. The third means to fill with strength, and the fourth to establish on a firm foundation. The net effect of these four positive verbs is that God intends to restore and establish securely those who are now suffering on his behalf."—Robert H. Mounce, *A Living Hope* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 89.

**Are you willing to describe for other Sabbath School members how the Lord restored you after a period of trial?**

## SALUTATION (1 Peter 5:12-14).

Who penned this Epistle for the apostle Peter? 1 Peter 5:12.

Peter had a literary assistant who wrote out for him what he wished to communicate to the believers in Christ. Peter, no doubt, himself wrote the closing words of salutation, thus following a pattern that Paul used in writing his Epistles. It is generally agreed by commentators that the Silvanus of verse 12 is the Silas that we read about in the book of Acts and in Paul's epistles.

The wording of the phrase, "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose," in the KJV tends to leave the reader wondering whether Peter had a question about Silas's loyalty. The RSV removes any doubt: "By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him."

What does the Bible tell us about Silas?

Acts 15:22 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 15:32 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 15:37-40 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:19, 25, 29, 37 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 17:13, 14 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Cor. 1:19 \_\_\_\_\_

We consider 1 Peter as the work of the apostle Peter and as an inspired book even though it was penned by someone else. Compare the work of writing assistants in the production of biblical books with the preparation of Ellen White's writings.

Where was 1 Peter written? 1 Peter 5:13.

**A message from Babylon.** *Babylon* is a cryptic name for the city of Rome. There is no existing evidence that Peter ever visited Babylon, although there was a large Jewish community in the Mesopotamian valley at the time 1 Peter was written. However, we do know that Peter was in Rome. In fact, according to historical tradition, he was crucified upside down just outside the city.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Review the First Epistle of Peter and read "A Faithful Undershepherd" in *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 514-528.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:**

What does Peter's Epistle mean to you? Peter ends his Epistle with the optimism that we have seen repeatedly throughout his letter by testifying, "This is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Peter 5:12). Select three statements made by Peter that have strengthened your faith and optimism about your future and the future of God's people.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY:** God has entrusted to men and women the sacred responsibility of helping to guide God's people through the experiences of life, the closing events of the great controversy, and into His everlasting kingdom. Peter admonishes these undershepherds and every member of Christ's church to be true to their calling and tender with the flock.

## Lessons for Fourth Quarter, 1992

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the fourth quarter of 1992 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is *A Song of Love*. This quarter's lessons cover *The Song of Solomon*.

### FIRST LESSON: "Solomon: The Shaping of a Bible Writer"

**Read for This Week's Study:** 2 Sam. 12:24, 25; 1 Kings 2:1-9; 3:3-13; 4:29-33; 8:22-30; 11:1-8.

**Memory Text:** Proverbs 10:9.

**Key Thought:** The life, the times, and the special gifts granted to Solomon prepared him to write his renowned Song.

#### Outline:

- I. Solomon's Family Background (2 Sam. 11:26, 27).
- II. A Special Gift for the New King (1 Kings 3:4-13, 28; 4:29, 33).
- III. The Fruitful Years (1 Kings 8:22-53).
- IV. Solomon's Sin and Repentance (1 Kings 11:1-4).
- V. Perfect Truth, Imperfect Vessel (Rom. 15:4).

### SECOND LESSON: "Textbook on Relationships"

**Read for This Week's Study:** 2 Tim. 3:15, 17; John 17:3; Matt. 22:37-40; Gen. 1:27, 31; Song of Solomon 1:9, 15; 2:2, 10, 13; 5:2, 16.

**Memory Text:** John 15:12.

**Key Thought:** The Song of Solomon complements the practical counsel on human love found elsewhere in the Word of God.

#### Outline:

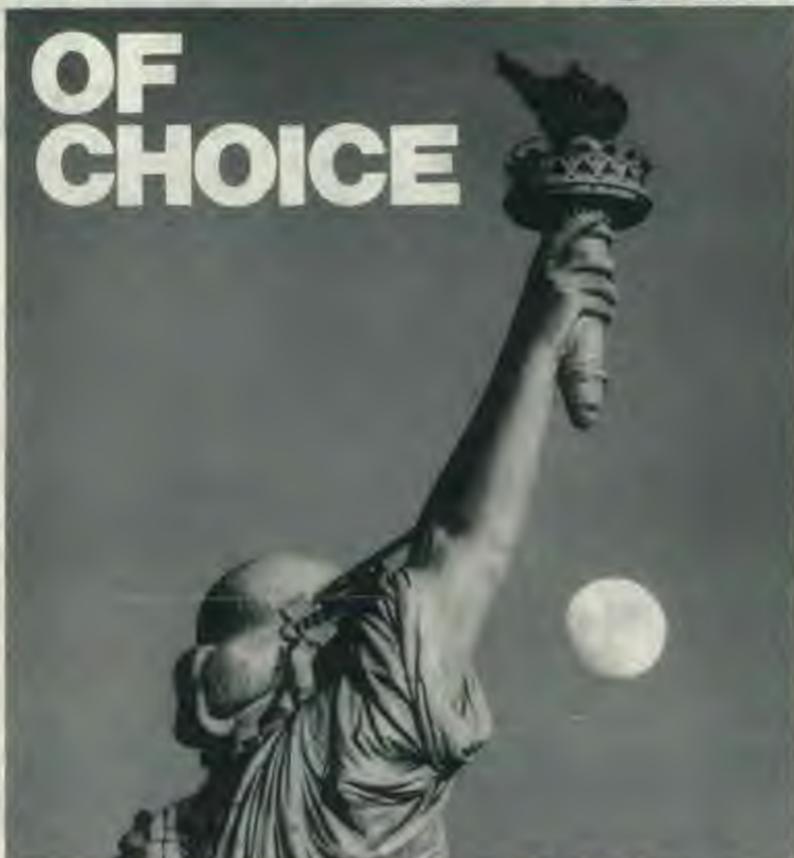
- I. Truth for Daily Living (2 Tim. 3:15-17).
- II. How Relationships Reveal Our Religion (Matt. 22:37-40).
- III. Understanding Human Affection (Gen. 1:27, 31).
- IV. Contribution of the Song of Solomon (Song 1:9; 2:2; 4:7; 5:2; 6:4).
- V. Rehearsal for the Grand Marriage (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; 2 Cor. 11:2).

### Lessons in Braille

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