



1 Peter Chapter One

Summary of Chapter One

The apostle Peter describes the intended recipients of this epistle, and greets them affectionately, blesses God for their regeneration into the true hope of eternal salvation, and it is in the hope of this salvation that he shows they had great cause of rejoicing. However, he confirms that for a little while they were and would continue to bear the burden of their affliction, for the trial of their faith, which would and should produce unspeakable joy and be full of glory.

This is that salvation which the OT prophets had foretold in such amazing detail and of which the angels in heaven desire to look into. He exhorts them to single-minded faith in Christ and to holiness, which he presses from the consideration of the blood of Jesus, the invaluable price of man's redemption and reconciliation to God, and to brotherly love, from the consideration of their regeneration, and the excellence of their spiritual state.

Peter speaks of their rebirth as a new creation in Christ and that, if they hold fast to the truth that is proclaimed to them through the Gospel message, the true word of God, they will come through this time of suffering and into a new life for the time of judgement is drawing near.

I 1 Peter 1:1-2 - Opening Exhortation

Peter identifies himself as the author. The geographical location of the recipients is indicated, and they are greeted with grace and peace. The introduction is theologically weighty, for the readers are identified as elect exiles and the accomplished salvation is attributed to the work of the Father, Spirit, and Son. An elect exile can refer to both a Diaspora Jewish Christian, i.e. Jews who were dispersed from the region of Palestine by the various invasions throughout Israel's troubled history, proselytes, i.e. Gentiles who converted to Judaism before coming to faith, and God-fearers, i.e. those who were attracted to Judaism but did not undergo Jewish ceremonial rites. But Peter is addressing mostly Gentiles, who have come to faith in Christ, and by doing so are the elect, strangers in the world, longing for their new heavenly home, and therefore also considered to be exiles.

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia,



The map shows all the places named by Peter, all of which are in modern day Turkey.

1 Peter 1:1

Peter designates himself as an apostle, an authoritative messenger of Jesus Christ. He was one of the original twelve apostles chosen personally by Jesus: <<*He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him*>> (Matthew 10:1-4). There were others that were also later designated apostles, including Judas Iscariot's replacement: <<*Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles*>> (Acts 1:26). The Lord's brother James seems to have had apostolic authority: <<*Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles*>> (1 Corinthians 15:7), and: <<*I saw none of the other apostles – only James, the Lord's brother*>> (Galatians 1:19). Paul was also considered an apostle as he was divinely selected by the Risen Lord Jesus: <<*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God*>> (Romans 1:1).

Peter is an apostle and his letter is a declaration of the Gospel of Christ, for apostle means one who carries a message by word of mouth, with the authority

of Christ to do so. Peter was not boasting of his gifts, as it is right for such a man to assert such graces in humility, for to fail to do so would be ingratitude. To claim them falsely would be hypocrisy and a base sin.

Apostle is the Greek word *apostolos* and means one who is sent, or messenger. Some claim from Paul's writing that it is the most eminent position in the church, when used in the technical sense, for those chosen personally by Christ. These men certainly were more than messengers as they were first eye-witnesses, Paul being a different but very special case, then preachers, prophets, workers of miracles. They clearly had great authority which Peter, Paul and John at least used with true humility and sensitivity to great effect. Paul's partial list of gifts is: *<<And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues>>* (1 Corinthians 12:28).

Peter's apostolic status not only gives him the right to compose his letters, it actually binds him as a duty to share what he has been entrusted with for the good of the church. He shares this with all the church, although he has special recommendations and instructions for those in a leadership position, his fellow elders.

Peter, Greek *Petros*, was actually called Simon, but Jesus had renamed him at their first meeting, after he had been introduced by John and Andrew: *<<And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter)>>* (John 1:42), and means a rock or more accurately a piece of rock, signifying his strength of faith in Christ: *<<And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it>>* (Matthew 6:18). He would be known as an eminent pillar of the faith, acknowledged by Paul: *<<James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognised the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews>>* (Galatians 2:9), James being the brother of Jesus and not of the apostle John.

The people receiving his letter are elect, strangers scattered in the world. Peter is probably not speaking of a literal exile: *<<Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear>>* (v.17), and: *<<Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from your sinful desires, which war against your soul>>* (1 Peter 2:11). Believers long for their true home in the new world that is coming and for their end-time inheritance, for they do not conform to the values and worldviews of this present evil age.

Believers are not only exiles but God's 'elect exiles'. They are his chosen people, just as Israel is designated as God's chosen people in the OT: *<<Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength>>* (Deuteronomy 4:37), *<<For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured*

possession. The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt>> (Deuteronomy 7:6-8), <<that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise>> (Psalm 106:5), <<The wild animals honour me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the desert and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen>> (Isaiah 43:20), and: <<For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though you do not acknowledge me>> (Isaiah 45:4).

Since the recipients of his letter included Gentiles, Peter explicitly teaches that the church of Jesus Christ is the new Israel, i.e. God's new chosen people. Dispersion, Greek Diaspora, points to the same truth. It is typically used to describe the scattering of the Jews throughout the world: <<*The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth>> (Deuteronomy 28:25), <<Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back>> (Deuteronomy 30:4), <<but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name>> (Nehemiah 1:9), <<The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel>> (Psalm 147:2), <<he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth">> (Isaiah 49:6), <<I will winnow them with a winnowing fork at the city gates of the land. I will bring bereavement and destruction on my people, for they have not changed their ways>> (Jeremiah 15:7), <<The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?>> (John 7:35), and: <<James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations>> (James 1:1).*

Acts 2:9-11 provides one of the most comprehensive ancient catalogues of the Jewish Diaspora, and is confirmed by other ancient lists, especially Philo, Embassy to Gaius 281-284, by early Jewish archaeological remains, and by many ancient literary sources. Peter sees a parallel in the church being dispersed throughout the world. Another view is that these verses show that the church is like Israel, but that the ultimate fulfilment of these OT prophecies pertains mainly to future ethnic Israel rather than to the church. This also applies to the comments on 1 Peter 1:22-2:10, 1 Peter 2:9, and 2:10.

Some of the Jewish families had been in the area since their deportation from the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in the 8th Century BC, but Antiochus, King of Syria, had relocated many Jewish families to Asia Minor about 200 years before the birth of Jesus. These families were those who had

stayed behind in Babylon after their exile had ended, and had not returned to Judæa at the time of Nehemiah and Ezra.

It is recorded that Peter travelled to Samaria and along the Mediterranean Sea coastal plains of Sharon and Lydda. He is also known to have travelled to Syrian Antioch and Rome. It is not known if he had personally travelled to these regions he now wrote to, but it is a distinct possibility and timelines would allow for it quite easily. There is certainly no evidence to suggest he ever travelled to the city of Babylon, where some commentators hold that he wrote the letter from while visiting Jews in that region.

Paul had preached in Galatia and Asia, but there is no record of him going into Bithynia, in fact: <<*When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to*>> (Acts 16:7). Although apostles normally did not preach in or write to other churches that had apostolic authority, at least not without reference to the overseeing apostle, it would not be in breach of those accepted norms to encourage and exhort believers in another apostolic area, with the blessing of the other apostle.

Peter was an apostle to the Jews, just as Paul was to the Gentiles as we saw recently: <<*James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews*>> (Galatians 2:9). However, Paul preached his message consistently to the Jews first, and here Peter does to Gentiles as well as Jews, showing the intended unity of Christ's church from the outset. The Gentiles here were probably proselytes or God-fearers attached to local synagogues but some seem to have come straight to faith in Jesus given some of the language in the epistle. Peter had, of course, had great success in bring the Roman Centurion and his whole household to faith under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts Chapter 10.

² who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

1 Peter 1:2

According to the foreknowledge of God. God will not permit all people to enter the Kingdom, only those that have come to faith in Jesus, those whom God foreknew from before eternity began. Those who are his own he will receive with all readiness, joy and gladness of heart. God rejoices with and in his chosen people.

Martin Luther writes: 'The human doctrine of free-will and of our own ability is futile'. It seems that all people have the ability to choose the call of God, but the call is according to God's will and grace alone, as is the acceptance, i.e. it is only for those who are chosen.

Peter celebrates the work of the triune God in saving his people; the descriptive phrases in v.2 modify <<*elect strangers*>> in v.1. They are God's people because of his foreknowledge. This does not merely refer to God's foreknowing that they would belong to him, but also means that he set his covenantal affection upon them in advance, foreordaining that they would belong to him: <<*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers*>> (Romans 8:29).

Foreknew reaches back to the OT, where the word 'know' emphasises God's special choice of, or covenantal affection for, his people, e.g. <<*For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him*>> (Genesis 18:19), <<*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations”*>> (Jeremiah 1:5), and: <<*“You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your sins”*>> (Amos 3:2). In Romans 11:2 it states: <<*God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah – how he appealed to God against Israel*>>, we will see that foreknew functions as the contrast to rejected, showing that it emphasises God's choosing his people.

Words like foreknew and predestined seem to contradict the idea of humans having free will to choose God and then how to live their lives for God, but with some element of their own input. I personally believe that God has given us free will to make choices, right or wrong, and then live with the consequences. God, of course, has a plan for our lives but he can also accommodate the choices we make. To understand this we need to try to think of it from God's perspective, which for humans is impossible of course. Unlike humans, God is not bound by any of the dimensional constraints; especially time. We tend to think in terms of time as the past, present and future; then perhaps on into eternity - a long time. But try to imagine that eternity is not a long time but just an instant. As God is outside of time he sees everything in that instant. Therefore, he knows what choices we make long before we make them, and therefore it can be said that he foreknew them. Another aspect of foreknowledge can be seen when things are ordered in the way creation is. For example, astronomers can predict with great accuracy when an eclipse will occur but they have no power to influence or affect that eclipse. God does have that capability, but does not always need or choose to exercise it.

Through the sanctifying work of the Spirit may refer here either to conversion or to gradual progress in the Christian life, or possibly to both. <<*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth*>> (2 Thessalonians 2:13). The Spirit sets apart God's people into the sphere of the holy, so that believers are now holy and righteous in their standing before God, and they grow in actual holiness in their lives. Sanctifying is more than just the cleansing or regeneration of the corrupt human body, it is a cleansing of the soul, making believers into a new creation in Christ. Sanctification is demonstrated through a believer's obedience to God.

Through sanctification a believer produces the fruits of the Spirit: <<***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law***>> (Galatians 5:22-23). Jesus had called upon his Father in heaven to sanctify his disciples: <<***Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth***>> (John 17:17).

For obedience to Jesus Christ may also refer either to conversion, when Christians confessed Jesus as Lord: <<***That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved***>> (Romans 10:9), <<***Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart***>> (v.22), or to God's purpose for their lives, that they obey Christ.

For sprinkling by his blood refers to Christ's atoning work on the Cross, where all the believers' sins were washed away, just as the old covenant was inaugurated with the shedding of blood: <<***When Moses went and told the people all the Lord's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the Lord has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey." Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words"***>> (Exodus 24:3-8). Peter sees believers 'sprinkled' with the blood of Christ, referring either to their initial entrance into a covenant with God, similar to Exodus 24:3-8, or to their subsequent cleansings by the blood of Christ, i.e., growth in holiness, or possibly to both, similar to: <<***He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields***>> (Leviticus 14:6-7), <<***Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow***>> (Psalm 51:7), and: <<***But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin***>> (1 John 1:7).

Grace and peace be yours in abundance. Grace and peace was both a greeting and a benediction, a call for blessing from God on the recipients of the letter. It was used in similar forms in all of Paul's epistles. Here, Peter is asking that God would pour it out upon his readership in significant measure, bestowing such a great blessing upon them all.

II 1 Peter 1:3-2:12 - Called to Salvation as Exiles

Those who have trusted in Christ are to praise God for his promised salvation and to live out that salvation in their daily lives. They are called to do this as strangers in a world that they do not belong to and yet they must live out their lives in. Some of the recipients were Jewish exiles in the real sense, being descendants of the Jewish tribes that were dispersed around the region by both the Assyrians and later the Syrian King Antiochus, who moved Babylonian Jews to the west. But Peter talks of exiles who belong the Kingdom of God and not of the world.

II.a 1 Peter 1:3-12 - Praise to God for a Living Hope

Peter begins the body of the letter by blessing God because he has given believers new life and guaranteed their future glory (vv.3-5). Believers rejoice in their sufferings because they are designed for their purity (vv.6-9). Christians are wonderfully blessed, for they know the fulfilment of OT prophecies, all of which point to Christ (vv.10-12).

This passage is the delightful description of the true Gospel that should be read and taught again and again. It shows that, by his death and resurrection, Jesus had opened the way to the Father for all who will believe he is the only way. And God has provided the solution of reconciliation at a time in history when man was far from God and not seeking a relationship with him at all.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1 Peter 1:3

Praise be to God. In many translations this shows that Peter is blessing God for what he has done for all those who are in Jesus Christ. A man blesses God by a just acknowledgment of his Excellency and blessedness. This God, so blessed, is the God of Jesus according to his human nature, and the Father of the Christ according to his divine nature.

Salvation is due to God's mercy, grace, and sovereignty, for he miraculously gave sinners new life, i.e. caused them to be: <<***born again***>> (v.23). Peter may be connecting born again to through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, meaning that the new birth was made possible because God thought of those who believe in Christ as being united to him in his resurrection: <<***We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life***>> (Romans 6:4), <<***and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms***>> (Ephesians 1:19-20), <<***made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus***>> (Ephesians 2:5-6), and: <<***Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right***>>

hand of God>> (Colossians 3:1). Or he may be linking the resurrection to the living hope of believers, since that hope immediately follows the resurrection. In the latter case, the hope of Christians is their future resurrection. Believers have an unshakable hope for the future, for Christ's resurrection is a pledge of their own future resurrection: <<*We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain*>> (Hebrews 6:19), and: <<*(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God*>> (Hebrews 7:19).

Jesus instructed the Pharisaic leader Nicodemus that we must all be born again, or born from above, if we wish to enter into the Kingdom of God: <<*In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again"*>> (John 3:3).

The resurrection of Christ is the act of the Father as a Judge, of the Son as a conqueror. His resurrection demonstrates that the Father accepts his death in full discharge for our ransom, that he is victorious over death, the grave, and all our spiritual enemies; and it is also an assurance of our own resurrection. This gives us new birth as we are risen with him to new life and a living hope. Again, we read the words of Paul: <<*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God*>> (Colossians 3:1).

⁴ and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for you,

1 Peter 1:4

The hope of v.3 is now described as an inheritance, which in the OT typically describes the Promised Land and Israel's place in it: <<*We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan*>> (Numbers 32:19), <<*Horites used to live in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out. They destroyed the Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the Lord gave them as their possession*>> (Deuteronomy 2:12), <<*since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you*>> (Deuteronomy 12:9), <<*When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!*>> (Deuteronomy 25:19), <<*When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it*>> (Deuteronomy 26:1), <<*So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions*>> (Joshua 11:23), and: <<*"To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit"*>> (Psalm 105:11). But the OT inheritance points ahead to an even greater inheritance, reserved in heaven for the people of the new covenant: <<*I am to be the only inheritance the priests have. You are to give them no possession in Israel; I will be their possession*>> (Ezekiel 44:28), and: <<*Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my*

Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world'>> (Matthew 25:34).

Never perish, spoil or fade or imperishable. The hope of the anointed believer is to heavenly life in the very presence of God the Father and his Son Jesus the Christ. While still on earth such people remain corruptible, but after their resurrection to new life they will truly be a new creation, one that is incorruptible and that cannot be defiled. During this earthly life believers are to invest in heavenly treasure and not that which is corruptible: *<<Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also>> (Matthew 6:19-21), <<And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also>> (Luke 12:29-34).* Nothing can tarnish or extinguish that secure inheritance. We hope for an inheritance that is near at hand, that is imperishable as well as undefiled. This blessing is ours by gift of grace and is forever, although we do not yet behold it. If we truly believe these words we will no longer lust after the perishable goods of this life. Not only are worldly goods perishable, they also defile and corrupt. What Christ offers is pure and it endures; it is permanent. Unlike humans, it does not age or deteriorate. Men grow weary of all things on earth. But not so with the blessings that are bestowed on us by Christ: *<<Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires>> (2 Peter 1:4).*

Inheritance would have been very important to the Jewish Christians, whose forefathers had squandered their original earthly inheritance in Canaan. The Gentile Christians were in the main poor and would have nothing to inherit in this life, but had now a hope of true inheritance in the next: *<<For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance – now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant>> (Hebrews 9:15).*

⁵ who through faith are 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

Kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation. In vv.4-5 Peter means that saints are being equipped to judge what is true and what is false, what is good and what is evil, what is appropriate and what is not, what is right and what is wrong, in order that they do

so. Such people are being safeguarded by the Holy Spirit within them through their anointing for a salvation yet to be fully revealed, at a time when God will truly manifest his ultimate purpose for mankind. They will not be deceived by evil, will be preserved and remain a judge of all doctrines.

Salvation in this context is a further description of the inheritance of v.4 and the hope of v.3. Peter lifts his readers' minds to what will be revealed in the last time. They will certainly receive this future salvation, for God will protect them through his power by sustaining their faith to the end. If faith is wanting there is nothing but error and blindness.

To be revealed in the last time. That is our great hope to see his heavenly glory on the day that all is revealed. Life and immortality are now brought to light by the Gospel, but this life will be revealed more gloriously at death, when the soul shall be admitted into the presence of Christ, and behold his glory; and even beyond this there will be a further and a final revelation: <<*How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure*>> (1 John 3:1-3).

It is not to be like one who merely talks of faith but performs no accompanying works: <<*But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have*>> (1 Corinthians 4:19), and: <<*What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?*>> (James 2:14).

⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this you greatly rejoice. The foregoing verses describe the excellence of their present state, and their grand expectations for the future. As people, we are subject to sorrows, personal and domestic. As Christians, our duty to God obliges us to frequent sorrow, and our compassion towards the poor and hungry, the dishonour done to God, the calamities of his church, and the destruction of mankind, due to their own folly and from divine vengeance, raise, in a generous and pious mind, almost continual sorrow, yet we always have more reason to greatly rejoice in the presence of our God.

Peter realises that joy is mingled with grief as Christians in Asia Minor, i.e. modern day Turkey, so clearly suffer all kinds of trials. The tribulation that these believers were currently experiencing was well worth it, for the reward they would receive far outweighed the suffering. As Paul exclaims: <<*I have great sorrow*

and unceasing anguish in my heart>> (Romans 9:2), and: <<*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all*>> (2 Corinthians 4:17). This world should hold no desires for the believer. Thus the world hates us: <<*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you*>> (John 15:18-19). We are to be patient as we endure suffering. The afflictions and sorrows of good people are but for a little while, they are but for a season, life itself is short and sorrows will not outlast it.

Little while denotes the whole of their earthly life before they inherit future salvation. God uses this phrase to warn of his coming wrath: <<*This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land*>> (Haggai 2:6), and Jesus uses it in relation to his death and resurrection, with perhaps an allusion to his Second Coming too: <<*"In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me"*>> (John 16:16). There are some people who would desire heaven sooner, impose a cross on themselves as if it were by their good works or own achievements, but we must realise it is only according to the will of God and his free gift of grace and mercy.

Though now, you may have had to suffer. These sufferings are God's will for his people, so that their faith might be purified and shown to be genuine. Such faith has a great reward, for when Jesus Christ is revealed, that is, at his return, honour and praise will belong both to Christians and to Christ. Although we receive such sufferings as a trial, they are not an affliction of God, but a requirement of our trial: <<*so that no one would be unsettled by these trials. You know quite well that we were destined for them*>> (1 Thessalonians 3:3). It is intended for our advantage and not our destruction. It is to prove the value and strength of our faith. It is not God's desire for our faith to fail as that leaves us with no spiritual benefit, as Jesus had prayed for Peter: <<*But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers*>> (Luke 22:32).

This is the hope in our priceless inheritance that is only available through faith. Faith is a sovereign preservative of the soul through a state of grace unto a state of glory. Our belief is by faith and not by works and yet we cannot do anything on our own so that even our belief is the work of the Holy Spirit. God's power must be present and at work within us in order that we may believe, as Paul says in Ephesians 1:17 <<*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better*>>.

Refined by fire. Fire is often used as a metaphor for testing, and the reference here to refining gold by fire is a trial of faith by testing and suffering: <<*This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The LORD is our God'*>> (Zechariah 13:9), <<*But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap*>> (Malachi 3:2), and: <<*I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich;*

and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see>> (Revelation 3:18).

Fire takes nothing away from gold other than impurities and therefore makes it pure and bright. We need daily refinement because of our sinful nature. We must not just face trials and tests, but we need to have faith in the process in order to have clean hearts before God, as we cannot achieve this through our own efforts: *<<But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold>> (Job 23:10), and: <<The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but man is tested by the praise he receives>> (Proverbs 27:21).*

Gold is the most valuable, pure, useful, and durable, of all the metals; so is faith among the Christian virtues; it lasts until it brings the soul to heaven, and then it issues in the glorious fruition of God for ever. The trial of faith is much more precious than the trial of gold; in both these processes there is purification, a separation of the dross, and a discovery of the soundness and goodness of the things being refined. Gold does not increase and multiply by trial in the fire, rather it grows less; but faith is established, improved, and multiplied, by the oppositions and afflictions that it meets with. The process of refinement will lead us to unspeakable joy in the time of the coming of the Lord.

Such refining of faith is like a father's disciplining, which can be unpleasant at the time but is shown to be of great benefit from the lessons learned: <<No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it>> (Hebrews 12:11).

Peter writes to encourage this group of disciples at a time of difficulty and testing so that when the Lord comes their faith will serve as something of value and be praiseworthy, bringing honour to them and to their King also. Such apostolic letters always provided much encouragement to those experiencing persecution and trials: <<and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels>> (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

Faith must be tested: <<The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart>> (Proverbs 17:3), <<because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance>> (James 1:3), and God tested the faith of Widow at Zarephath, who had no food to spare, but: <<Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son>> (1 Kings 17:13).

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1 Peter 1:8-9

Though you have not seen him. These people, just like the vast majority of disciples of Christ, never saw or heard Jesus for themselves, but came to faith by hearing the Gospel proclaimed to them by faithful servants of the Word. During an emotional meeting between Jesus and Thomas after the Resurrection, we read: *<<Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”>>* (John 20:29). There is a popular saying that seeing is believing, but there is far greater joy and reward in a faith that believes without seeing first.

Glorious joy is not reserved only for the future when Jesus will be clearly seen at his revelation: *<<So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy>>* (John 16:22). Even now, his followers love him, believe in him, and are filled with an inexpressible joy so they can do little else other than rejoice.

The end result, the goal of your faith, is eternal salvation – the completion of God’s saving work. Although salvation is something immediately given to all who come to faith, they remain on a journey, for salvation is not truly and fully realised until after their lives have ended or more likely at the Lord’s return, even though this may come much later. However, this should not deter believers from living in the reality of their salvation in this life. Their good conscience that God has given them through the Holy Spirit is proof of their right standing before God in love: *<<But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life>>* (Romans 6:22), *<<But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name>>* (John 20:31), and: *<<But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved>>* (Hebrews 10:39).

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

1 Peter 1:10-11

Even though the OT prophets did not see clearly when their prophecies would be realised, they did foretell that Christ would suffer and then be glorified: *<<For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it>>* (Matthew 13:17).

The Spirit of Christ is the Holy Spirit, who was speaking through the prophets: *<<I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says the Lord Almighty>>* (Haggai 2:7), and: *<<Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord>>* (Zechariah 6:12). It was the prophets who were sent to the Jews to inform

them that they should be the ones to proclaim the Christ to come to the world and to accept him when he arrived, but they did neither.

The prophets could not be precise as to when Christ would come but they were sure of the circumstances of his coming, his death and the subsequent giving of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the Spirit of Christ, at Pentecost. Daniel came closest to predicting the time with his Seventy Sevens prophecy in Daniel 9:20-27, which many had predicted to be the very same Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out, although many had said it would be after the demise of Israel and Judah as a nation and kingdom, which had long before come to pass.

The grace that was to come. This is the amazing gift that was prophesied, that the Creator and Sustainer of all things, seen and unseen, would pour out his grace upon all who would call on the name of Jesus as the Christ and Saviour of the world. Grace is something that can never be truly understood or quantified; it is truly amazing and even outrageous grace, according to song writer Godfrey Birtill.

The Christ had to suffer before entering his glory and this had come to pass. Here Peter alludes to all Christians having to suffer with and in Christ, which he too suffers with us, because he had suffered before us, and after this suffering we will be able to share in his joy.

Christ's death and resurrection did away with, or rather fulfilled, that part of Scripture that was outward and physical, but the inward and spiritual part still remains. That is the aspects of faith and love of God, including the aspects of love taught by Jesus and now through the Holy Spirit.

Before Christ all men were condemned in Adam, but through Christ all will be blessed and redeemed, because he is the seed of promise to all mankind, not the biological descendants of Abraham but the spiritual descendants, i.e. all those that would have faith in Jesus as the Christ. The apostles were able to prove from Scripture that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Messiah and that the Gospel message had to be taken to the Gentiles. This truth should have persuaded the Jews to turn to Christ but most did not.

The Jewish Christians would have been comforted to know that the Gospel was not something new, but the fulfilment of all that had always been promised them. The Gentiles would have been encouraged that those same prophets had seen and welcomed the inclusion of the Gentiles. The Word of God had not failed for it identifies the children of God as being spiritual Israel and not biological Israel: <<*It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel*>> (Romans 9:6), and therefore the promises made by God to the patriarchs held true. The grace that came by the Gospel excels all that was before it; the Gospel dispensation is more glorious, evident, intelligible, extensive, and effectual, than any dispensation that ever did precede it.

The psalmists speak on suffering for men are like a worm (Psalm 22), and of the affliction of Christians, i.e. sheep for slaughter, (Psalm 44):

1. Jesus Christ had a being before his incarnation; for his Spirit did then exist in the prophets, and therefore, he whose that Spirit then was, must be in being also.
2. The doctrine of the Trinity was not wholly unknown to the faithful in the OT. The prophets knew that they were inspired by a Spirit that was in them; this Spirit they knew to be the Spirit of Christ, and consequently distinct from Christ himself. Here is a plurality of persons, and from other parts of the Old Testament a Trinity may be collected.
3. The works here ascribed to the Holy Spirit prove him to be God. He did signify, discover, and manifest to the prophets, many hundreds of years beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, with a multitude of particular circumstances relating to his sufferings; and he did also testify, or give proof and evidence beforehand, of the certainty of that event, by inspiring the prophets to reveal it, to work miracles in confirmation of it, and by enabling the faithful to believe it. These works prove the Spirit of Christ to be God, since he is possessed of almighty power and infinite knowledge.
4. From the example of Christ Jesus, we should learn to expect a time of service and sufferings before we are received into glory. It was so with Jesus, and the disciple is not above his Lord: <<*A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master*>> (Matthew 10:24). The suffering time is but a short while, but the glory is everlasting; let the suffering season be ever so sharp and severe, it shall not hinder, but work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in the ages to come.

¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

1 Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them. The Holy Spirit was upon those prophets chosen by God to exhort the nation of Israel to what he had planned for them and how it would happen: <<*The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me; his word was on my tongue*>> (2 Samuel 23:2). This gave them great encouragement but the Jews failed collectively as a nation to fully understand the Scriptures or heed the warnings of the prophets: <<*I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"*>> (Daniel 12:8).

<<*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised*>> (Hebrews 11:39). The Spirit revealed to these ancient prophets that it was not to themselves during their own lifetime but to anointed believers in a generation yet to come that they were ministering these things to, which have now been announced to that generation and all

generations since as the Gospel of Truth. This was through the Holy Spirit sent by God to men like Peter. Even the angels in heaven are intently looking into these grand expressions of the Holy Spirit.

Christians have received astounding blessings, for the OT prophets were not serving themselves but you, that is, NT believers, and angels long to understand fully what has been accomplished. Christians have heard this good news in the Gospel that was being proclaimed to them by the apostles and other teaching disciples.

The angels' reaction to the good news that was foretold by the prophets should be sufficient to tell us that we too should seek for ourselves this great news and then accept it fully in faith. Our eyes may not behold it and our minds not fully understand what it really entails, but our hearts can perceive it and we can joyfully accept this great free gift of God. How much more will he now give through him who gave everything up for us? As Paul writes: *<<For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?>>* (Romans 5:17).

They spoke of the things. From the time of Abraham, through the times of the prophets until the announcement of the time, such things were in evidence for those who would listen: *<<Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad>>* (John 8:56), *<<Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?>>* (Isaiah 53:1), and: *<<Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!>>* (Luke 1:45).

Just as the Jews should have accepted what the prophets had foretold in Scripture, so too all people since the time of Christ should accept what is being taught through the Gospel and align their lives to it.

We should note here:

1. The prophets, through the Spirit, accurately foretold that Christ would come and they provided many details of his life, death, resurrection and the effect this would have on the world.
2. The apostles were eye-witnesses to what had happened and had checked it out with the Scriptures to ensure it was in line with what the prophets had said. The Berean Jews reacted in this way when they first heard the Gospel proclaimed by Paul: *<<Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true>>* (Acts 17:11).
3. The angels, who most attentively pry into these matters, played a key part in the whole affair, especially from the night of Jesus' birth: *<<But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people">>* (Luke 2:10), supporting Jesus in his final anguish in the garden: *<<An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he*

prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground>> (Luke 22:43-44), opening the tomb to show the world that he had risen from death: <<There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it>> (Matthew 28:2), announcing that his had taken place: <<The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you”>> (Matthew 28:5-7), and foretelling his return at the time of his ascension: <<After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven”>> (Acts 1:9-11).

II.b 1 Peter 1:13-2:3 - Be Holy

The inheritance promised to followers of Christ should motivate them to set their hope entirely on their future reward (vv.13-16), and to live in fear of the God who redeemed them at the cost of his own Son (vv.17-21). Since Christians have been given new life by the Word of God, they are to love one another fervently (vv.22-25). They are to long for God’s Word, so that they will continue to grow in faith (1 Peter 2:1-3).

¹³ Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

1 Peter 1:13

Therefore. Because of all the blessings they had received as believers, and outlined in the previous verse, then the following exhortations apply. This is an admonition to faith and the sense is this, while things are preached to us and bestowed upon us through the Gospel as the angels rejoice, we should behold what is taught and accept it with confidence. It is not a fanciful wish or dream but the promised reality of God.

Prepare your minds for action. The life of a believer is as much spiritual as it is physical. The first thing we need to do is to have a change of mindset: <<**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will**>> (Romans 12:2). That is, the main work of a Christian lies in the right management of his heart and mind. Disciples of Christ need to stay close to their Lord in order for them to perceive what the Spirit is saying if they are to take appropriate action when the opportunities present themselves, for they are instructed to: <<**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things**>> (Colossians 3:2).

Set your hope fully. The fullness of **grace** and its complete work will come only when Jesus returns, and believers should long for that day. They do so by thinking rightly about reality, and by living **self-controlled** and sensible lives in this present evil age. To be **self-controlled** refers to avoiding the lusts of the sinful nature and to have to a renewed mindset to help battle the desires of the flesh. We must allow the Holy Spirit to work in cooperation with our spirit to assist and guide us. Even though believers are now justified they are still very much a work in progress. Not that we should use that as an excuse for sin and we must offer up repentance on a daily basis.

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. ¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; ¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

1 Peter 1:14-16

While living on this earth, Christians have to fight the desires of sin, so they are **called** to be **obedient children**, separated from evil in all that they do. They are to **be holy**: <<*Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the Lord your God’*>> (Leviticus 18:2-4), for that accords with the character of God who **is holy** and has called believers to himself.

They are called into a new family relationship that requires different standards of behaviour and attitude. It is not acceptable for them to behave or even think as they once did: <<*We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*>> (2 Corinthians 10:5). Those who have been adopted as sons and daughters of God must **be holy** at all times before their God, if they are to be considered as **obedient children**: <<*he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will*>> (Ephesians 1:5).

Evil desires. There are also those who believe they will come to heaven by their own works. They are often vain, conceited and hypocritical. Mary speaks of these: <<*He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts*>> (Luke 1:51), as does Jesus in ‘The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector’ (Luke 18:9-14).

In summary, the **children** of God ought to prove themselves to be such by their **obedience** to God, by their present, constant, universal obedience. The grace of God in calling a sinner to himself through Christ is a powerful engagement to **holiness**. It is a great favour to be called effectually by divine grace out of a state of sin and misery into the possession of all the blessings of the new covenant; and great favours are strong obligations; they enable as well as oblige us **to be holy**. We will do well to remember this: <<*In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me”*>> (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Be holy, because I am holy is taken from Leviticus 19:2. If we accept Jesus as Lord over our lives, and we know that he is holy, then we have to try to live our lives in a way that reflects Jesus. That is, we too are to be holy in everything we say, do and even think: <<**Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee**>> (Psalm 86:2 KJV). Being baptised into the name of Jesus should make us holy. Putting on Christ Jesus as Lord should make us holy. We then choose whether to live the way we are called to.

We are called be holy, as God is holy: we must imitate him, although we can never equal him. He is perfectly, unchangeably, and eternally holy; and we should aspire after such a state. The consideration of the holiness of God should oblige us as to the highest degree of holiness we can attain to. The written Word of God is the surest rule of a Christian's life, and by this rule we are commanded to be holy in every way. Although Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law, and much of it is now superseded by the law of grace, the OT commands are still to be studied and obeyed in the times and terms of the NT; the apostle, by virtue of a command delivered several times by Moses, requires holiness in all Christians. Just as a virgin is inviolate and pure in body, so too the believer's soul should be spiritually pure and inviolate in true faith and holiness.

Throughout history there have been many good disciples who have misunderstood the demands of trying to become holy while the tension exists within us between the Spirit and our sinful nature. Such people have often gone to extremes of penance and self-abasement. Martin Luther warns against those who take repentance and penance too far by destroying their bodies with excessive fasting. Our bodies are temples, holy to God and should be cared for appropriately. We can be of no use to other members of the body of Christ if we neglect the physical well-being of our body through mortification of our sinful nature. Fasting is appropriate for repentance and for many other purposes as well, but it should be done through a genuine desire to be close to God. It should not be done as the Pharisees did to make themselves appear ill by putting ashes on their faces and going unwashed so that people would notice their apparent suffering for God and think highly of them for it. Also, Luther warns against the damage to the body through gluttony and drunkenness. Food and drink are gifts from God but to overindulge is a vile sin in his teaching.

1 Peter 1:17-21

The veil is lifted to reveal the true nature of God. Man does not judge justly as he does not judge all alike and shows partiality to those who are rich, reputable, learned, wise and powerful: <<**Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?**>> (James 2:2-4). But God is no respecter of persons but judges them by their heart. Genuine good deeds will be rewarded but only if they are carried out for the right motives and not in expectation of the reward.

¹⁷ Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

1 Peter 1:17

Since you call. Peter's certainty is that the recipients are diligent in their prayer lives. The words of David once again seem appropriate and prophetic: <<*Hear my prayer, O Lord, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were*>> (Psalm 39:12).

Father who judges impartially may refer only to the final judgment, when believers will be judged according to their deeds or work: <<God "will give to each person according to what he has done">> (Romans 2:6), <<*This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares*>> (Romans 2:16), and: <<*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad*>> (2 Corinthians 5:10). More likely, Peter has in mind both this present life and the last day as well. God is not only the Father of his people but also their judge. As proof that God shows no partiality he struck the son of Pharaoh dead along with all the other first born of Egypt, poor and rich alike: <<*For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes*>> (Deuteronomy 10:17), and: <<*Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery*>> (2 Chronicles 19:7).

The consideration of God as a judge is not improper for those who can truly call him Father. Holy confidence in God as a father, an awful fear of him as a judge, are very consistent; to regard God as a judge is a singular means to endear him to us as a father.

Fear is not a paralysing terror but a fear of God's discipline and fatherly displeasure; it is a reverence and awe that should characterise the lives of believers during their exile on this earth (v.1), i.e. as they live your lives as strangers here. Therefore Peter warns us not to glory in the title Christian as though it were a badge of right. We are called to fear God - to show reverent fear to the Almighty who has the power to cast those into eternal hell who do not turn to him through Christ: <<*I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him*>> (Luke 12:4-5).

¹⁸ For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

1 Peter 1:18-19

For you know. They were well aware of the reason and cost of their redemption:

1. That they were redeemed, or bought back again, by a ransom paid to the Father.
2. What the price paid for their redemption was. Not with corruptible or perishable things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.

The reason for the call to fear (v.17) is given in vv.18-19. Believers were ransomed by Christ's precious blood. It was not redeemed with corruptible things like gold or silver: <<*For this is what the Lord says: "You were sold for nothing, and without money you will be redeemed"*>> (Isaiah 52:3). The blood of Jesus Christ is the *only* price of man's redemption: <<*No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him – the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough – that he should live on forever and not see decay*>> (Psalm 49:7-9). The redemption of man is real, not metaphorical. We are bought with a price, and the price is equal to the purchase, for it is the precious blood of Christ; it is the blood of an innocent person, a lamb without blemish and without defect, whom the paschal lamb and the daily offerings at the temple represented: <<*Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together*>> (Genesis 22:6-8), and of an infinite person, being the Son of God, and therefore it is called the blood of God: <<*Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood*>> (Acts 20:28).

Ransom recalls Israel's deliverance from Egypt: <<*But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt*>> (Deuteronomy 7:8), <<*I prayed to the Lord and said, "O Sovereign Lord, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand*>> (Deuteronomy 9:26), <<*Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today*>> (Deuteronomy 15:15), and: <<*Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this*>> (Deuteronomy 24:18), which in turn points to the greater deliverance accomplished by Jesus Christ. Believers are delivered from a life of futility and meaninglessness to one of great significance.

You were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers. Christ's sacrifice breaks the inevitability and power of generational sin, the idea that the sins of parents and grandparents are often repeated in later generations: <<*You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing*

love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments>> (Exodus 20:5-6).

The Jews had made the mistake of believing that, as Abraham's seed and God's children, they need do no more than belong to that group to have salvation by right. God has cut them out of the vine for dismissing Jesus as the Messiah and grafted in the wild olive branches of the Gentiles to replace them because they had faith in the message and embraced the Gospel. However, complacency can lead to those branches being lopped off again just as easily. All the time we live with our sinful nature we are not in a secure nest in that tree but precariously placed, out on a limb!

God had not said that he would save all Jews as it was the seed of promise through whom Christ was descended by natural generation and those that followed him that were the children of God by spiritual rebirth. The promise was to all people who would believe in Jesus as the Christ, Jew and Gentile. Likewise, the promise did not say that all Gentiles would be saved either.

Christ's sacrifice is compared to a lamb without blemish or defect. The references to lamb and blood point to the OT sacrifices and especially to Christ as the Passover Lamb, see Exodus Chapter 12, and the servant of the Lord: *<<He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth>> (Isaiah 53:7)*. As the perfect sacrifice, Christ atoned for the sins of the unrighteous: *<<The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!>> (John 1:29)*, and: *<<For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit>> (1 Peter 3:18)*.

God's law required the sacrifice to be unblemished. Christ was the only unblemished one in human flesh that could be offered as the ultimate sacrifice of propitiation for sin: *<<When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!>> (Hebrews 9:11-14)*.

²⁰ He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹ Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

1 Peter 1:20-21

This passage shows that we have not deserved this reward nor did we even think to ask God for it. It was far beyond human comprehension to think up such a plan for salvation. The glory can never be ours for it belongs to the Father only; even Jesus said: *<<If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once>>* (John 13:32), and: *<<Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you>>* (John 17:1b).

He was chosen before the creation of the world. Scripture reveals to us that Jesus, as the true Word of God, was with the Father in the very act of creation, for it was through him that all things came into being: *<<In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it>>* (John 1:1-5), and: *<<The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth>>* (John 1:14).

Christians should live in holy fear (v.17) because they are deeply loved and should not despise that love. Since Christ was chosen or foreknown, (see v.2), it is clear that God had planned from eternity past when he would send Christ, and he chose to reveal him at the time in history when these believers lived, i.e. for your sake, so that they would enjoy the inexpressible privilege of living in the days of fulfilment (vv.10-12). They should be full of hope, where hope functions as an *inclusio* – a literary envelope – beginning and ending this section: v.13 and v.21; for Christ's resurrection reminds them of their future reward.

Was revealed. The veil has been lifted: *<<But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away>>* (2 Corinthians 3:14-16). God has promised and revealed or made known to us, not for any merit of ours, that which he from all eternity had provided and foreordained, before the world was made. In the prophets it was indeed promised, yet dimly and not openly; but now, since Christ's resurrection and the sending of the Holy Spirit, it is publicly preached and disseminated throughout the whole world.

God and Christ did not need to reveal any of it, but they have done so for our sake. The gift is to have access to the Father in heaven, but only through the mediation of the Lord. This comes to us, not in our effort, power or merit, but from the power of the Holy Spirit that God has poured out on us. God has created the power in us only because Christ has merited it by his blood and faithful service in fulfilling the Father's will for his life; to whom God has given the glory and, after raising him from the dead, seated him at the highest place of honour in all creation, at the right hand of God the Father: *<<The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet">>* (Psalm 110:1), and among Stephen's final words in this life: *<<"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God">>* (Acts

7:56). This demonstration of God's awesome power should produce faith in everyone, but only a few have responded over the generations since then.

These last times. Peter says this is the latter age, the now but not yet of the Kingdom of God, wherein we live now following the ascension of Christ into heaven and will continue to live until the last day, when Christ will return to judge the world: <<*He will judge the world in righteousness; he will govern the peoples with justice*>> (Psalm 9:8), <<*they will sing before the LORD, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth*>> (Psalm 96:13), <<*I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day*>> (John 12:46-48).

The final day, **these last times**, is not far away as God decides them to be, although Peter acknowledges: <<*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day*>> (2 Peter 3:8). From this statement it would lead us, by this reckoning of time, to conclude, after God's method, that it is the last time, and that the end approaches, but the time which still remains is nothing in God's sight. The salvation is already revealed and completed: God permits the world to stand yet longer, merely that his name may be more widely honoured and praised, although he for himself is now fully revealed. Thus he has set the date, as Paul acknowledges: <<*For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead*>> (Acts 17:31). When will that day be? Speaking to the apostles, Jesus had confirmed it, when: <<*He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority"*>> (Acts 1:7), and previously he had stated: <<*No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father*>> (Matthew 24:36).

The prophets, the apostles and Christ himself confirm this last hour was not to follow immediately after the ascension, but that Christ would reign in heaven for a time so that his church could be built and the word taken out from Jerusalem to the end of the earth: <<*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*>> (Acts 1:8), and: <<*In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 'The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever – yes, for ever and ever.'*>> Then I wanted

to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws – the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell – the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom>> (Daniel 7:13-22).

From the conclusion of the Gospel writings, i.e. Christ's revelation to John, until the final trumpet sounds, there will be no more manifestations or revelations, except that which is explained and revealed. Miraculous works of the Spirit will continue to be seen through those who have been so gifted, but these are the works greater than Jesus did, which he had spoken about: *<<I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father>> (John 14:12).*

<<God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob – has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation">> (Exodus 3:15). For the patriarchs, although they knew God, yet at that time had not so clear a manifestation of him as was afterwards put forth through Moses and the prophets; but now there has no more glorious or clear manifestation of him come into the world than Jesus: <<Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work>> (John 14:8-10). And through Jesus we have the full and true Gospel, the Word of God from eternity past. Therefore, his revelation is the last; all dispensations have run their course, except the present, also the last, which is revealed to us in Christ Jesus.

Raised him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ, considered as an act of power, is common to all the three persons of the Trinity; but as an act of judgment, it is peculiar to the Father who, as a judge, released Christ, raised him from the grave, and gave him all the glory, proclaimed him to all the world to be his Son by his resurrection from the dead, advanced him to heaven, crowned him with glory and honour, invested him with all power in heaven and earth, and glorified him with that glory, which he had with God before the world came into being.

Glorified him. Jesus requested this of his Father during his time of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: *<<And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began>> (John 17:5).*

²² Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Now that you have. It seems that Peter knew the churches well enough to know that they had undertaken to do all they could to be faithful and obedient disciples in Christ Jesus.

Peter's call for his readers to have sincere love for your brothers, i.e. love one another, is grounded in their conversion, which occurred when they were obeying the truth, i.e. the Gospel, and therefore they were purified and cleansed. See comments made on v.2 for obedience and sprinkling.

Love one another. Jesus has ordered: <<A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another>> (John 13:34), elsewhere John repeats this theme: <<Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble>> (1 John 2:10), and Paul teaches on this too: <<Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other>> (1 Thessalonians 4:9). A real life example was seen in the brotherly love expressed between David and King Saul's son Jonathan: <<After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself>> (1 Samuel 18:1). Peter, John and Paul each distinguishes brotherly love and love in general as the gift that comes through the grace of God, a gift that allows us to share all things in equality, no matter what our earthly status may be, no matter what gifts we may have, no matter what level of earthly wealth we may be stewards of - we are all equal in the sight of God and we should share the common bond of serving the one living God. This is seen in that we share in the one baptism, the one faith, the one Christ and the one treasure. No true believer is any better than another in God's eyes. They were all purchased for him at the same price!

Christian brotherhood is not like the other brotherhoods set up in the world that are vain deceptions and corruptions, which the devil has devised and brought into the world, that are only antagonistic to the one true faith and to genuine brotherly love: <<As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other>> (John 15:9-17), and: <<When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly

love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs”>> (John 21:15). Anything short of this type of brotherly love and response would be false, a feigned or imagined thing, and would only be hypocrisy.

As recently noted, all true believers are of equal worth for the cost of their redemption was equally as high. But this love is greater than brotherhood for it extends to all neighbours and indeed to all enemies as well, especially to those who we may not deem worthy of our love, for such is Christ’s command. For just as faith performs its work where it sees nothing, so also should love see nothing and there especially exercise its grace where there appears nothing lovely, but only disaffection and hostility. Just as God loved us when there was nothing worthy of love: <<You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us>> (Romans 5:6-8).

²³ For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

1 Peter 1:23

Born again. This is a rebirth of the spirit within a person when they come to faith: <<He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created>> (James 1:18). Jesus had spoken of this to the Pharisaic teacher Nicodemus: <<In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”>> (John 3:3). Faith is a divine power not a vain dream. When man truly believes through faith he is to be born again and become a new man, and to perform works as directed by the Holy Spirit, following the dictates of his faith.

Through this new birth we become a new creation in Christ. We have put off the old man: <<For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin>> (Romans 6:6). Just as we were born in our parents’ sin and then grew in that imputed sin, so now we are born again to grow as a new person in Christ. Therefore, we ought not to be like the person we were before or do the same things we once did, but now we should do the things of Christ: <<Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will>> (Romans 12:2).

The grace of regeneration is conveyed by the Gospel. This new and second birth is much more desirable and excellent than the first. This the apostle teaches by preferring the incorruptible to the corruptible seed. By the one we become the children of men, by the other the sons and daughters of the Most High: <<Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God>> (John 1:12-13).

Jesus once said: <<He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you”>> (Matthew 17:20). The image of the mustard seed gives an idea of just how much we can grow in terms of the Kingdom!



The Word of God being compared to seed teaches us that although it is little in appearance, yet it is wonderful in operation, although it lies hidden for a while, yet it grows up and produces excellent fruit at last: <<Again he said, “What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed you plant in

the ground. Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds of the air can perch in its shade”>> (Mark 4:30-32).

Once a person is born again they are completely changed spiritually, although some of the same old human nature remains to draw them back to their old ways, but as they grow in Christ they will be drawn to the Godly things they had formerly avoided and will avoid the harmful things they were formally drawn to.

Not of perishable seed. The seed that we are to grow from is the Word of God. Planted in our hearts, watered by those who teach it to us, but ultimately grows in accordance with God’s will and the Spirit’s power in alignment with the teachings of Christ: <<He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times”>> (Mark 4:2-8).

Peter proclaims that the Word of God is that which is being given to them here, and that it is true and faithful. Moses too had proclaimed this to the Israelites: <<Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it>> (Deuteronomy 30:11-14).

Believers were born anew through the living and enduring word of God, meaning the whole of written Scripture (v.25), but especially the saving message of the Gospel. The exhortation to love (v.22), flows from their new life as members of God’s family. The Word of God lives and abides forever. This Word is a living word:

<<For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart>> (Hebrews 4:12). It is a means of spiritual life, to begin it and preserve in it, animating and exciting us in our duty, until it brings us to eternal life: and it is abiding; it remains eternally true, and abides in the hearts of the regenerate forever. *The Word Is Alive!*

²⁴ For,

“All men are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,

²⁵ but the word of the Lord stands forever.”

And this is the word that was preached to you.

1 Peter 1:24-25

Peter cites Isaiah 40:6 and 40:8 to contrast the weakness of human flesh with the power of the word of the Lord that has granted new life to believers. It takes a lifetime for mankind to apply the Scriptural principles of God. If we allow God's Word to enter our hearts, it will never die and indeed it will flourish, and we will flourish with it. It will not allow us to perish if we hold on to its truth; it will hold on to us in that same truth.

All men are like grass. Take man in all his glory, even this is as the flower of grass; his wit, beauty, strength, vigour, wealth, honour – these are but as the flowers of grass, which soon wither and die away: <<*He springs up like a flower and withers away; like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure*>> (Job 14:2), and: <<*A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass”*>> (Isaiah 40:6-7). Or more precisely, man is but dust: <<*the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being*>> (Genesis 2:7), and: <<*As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field*>> (Psalm 103:13-15).

All their glory is like the flowers of the field. Jesus had alluded to this in his teaching on how God provides all our earthly needs, exhorting his disciples to greater faith in doing so: <<*Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!*>> (Luke 12:27-28).

And this is the word that was preached to you. Peter is saying this is the only Gospel and that we should not receive another. Paul agrees: <<*I am not ashamed*

of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith”>> (Romans 1:16-17). The Word is a divine and eternal power, for although the voice or speech is soon gone, yet the substance remains; that is, the sense, the truth, which is conveyed by the voice. The Word falls into the heart and lives, while the voice remains without and passes away. Speaking to Moses: <<The Lord said to him, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say”>> (Exodus 4:11-12).

This first chapter taught us the true Gospel of faith. The second instructs us in the matter of works, how we should conduct ourselves toward our neighbour.