

1 Peter

Chapter 1

1:2. “sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ.” This sprinkling of the blood of Christ is not referring to the new birth, or the cleansing of sin when one gets saved. Rather, this is speaking of a continual cleansing of sin throughout a believer’s life. The Greek of 1 Peter 1:2 literally reads, “In sanctification of spirit resulting in [*eis* # 1519 *εις*] obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The obedience and sprinkling of the blood is the result of sanctification. If sanctification means the act of being made holy by God, this verse would be very confusing; we usually think of this sanctified state as the result of being washed by the blood of Christ, forgiven of our sins, and not the other way around (1 Cor. 6:11). Sanctification is not used only in this sense in scripture, however. It can also refer to the progressive holiness in the believer’s life as he sets himself apart from the world (1 Thess. 4:3-7; 1 Tim. 2:15; 21). This is its sense in this passage; this sanctification results in obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

That the sprinkling of Christ’s blood on believers is not merely a one-time salvation event can be seen in

1 John 1:7-9 (NIV):

(7) 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. (8) If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

In the context of 1 John, to walk in the light is to acknowledge (confess) that one has sin (1 John 1:6); when we do this Christ’s blood purifies us from all sin.

The connection of obedience and sprinkling of blood in here in 1 Peter is an allusion to the Old Testament record of Moses sprinkling the Israelites who claimed they would obey all the words of the covenant (Exod. 24:7-8). The sprinkling of blood in the Old Covenant was not a one-time event either, but had two stages. First, there was the Day of Atonement, the yearly festival when the high priest would sacrifice for his own sin then sacrifice and sprinkle blood for the guilt of the people (Lev. 16). This was done to cover all the sins of the people that year. Secondly, there were all the other offerings that could be done throughout the year—burnt offerings, trespass offerings, guilt offerings—when one has sinned and felt separated from God. The blood of Christ in the New Covenant parallels this twofold purpose of sprinkling in the Old Covenant—there is the one-time sprinkling that covers the guilt of our sin and there is the continual sprinkling of forgiveness for sins throughout life. The difference between the Old and New covenants is that instead of a yearly offering, Christ offered himself once-and-for-all to redeem the people, and instead of cleansing our conscience with the blood of bulls and goats we can appeal to the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:25-26; 10:1-14). 1 Peter 1:18-19, which speaks of Christ’s blood “redeeming” us, is referring to a Day-of-Atonement-like function of Christ’s sacrifice, while 1 John 1:7-9 speaks to the continual sprinkling that has made the various sin offerings obsolete.

1:3. “who.” The Greek has the article *ho* (#3588 ὁ) before the active participle translated “given us new birth;” this is done for emphasis on “the one” who is doing the action. An expanded translation would read, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **the one** who... has given us new birth” (emphasis added).

“mercy.” Cp. Ephesians 2:4. We do not deserve life, but God gives it in His mercy.

“new birth into a living hope.” For the New Birth to be seen for all that it is, we must see it in relation to the Hope. The New Birth gives us many blessings now, but they are small if all we have is this life without an everlasting future. We are still in our flesh bodies and have many problems. Yet, we have new birth into a living hope—we shall one day have new bodies and live forever in Paradise.

Another possible translation, although less readable, would be “birthed us again.” The NASB, ESV reading, “caused us to be born again” gives the wrong impression. God did not “cause” us to be born again, although He was the One who gave birth in us. The decision to get “born again” was ours.

The Greek word for “new birth” is the active voice, aorist tense, participle of *anagennaō* (#313 ἀναγεννάω). The active voice shows that God is the one begetting us again, he is performing the action of producing the new birth. But this does not show that he *caused* us to be born again, only that he performed the action of new birth once the cause was fulfilled. The scope of scripture indicates that it is our faith and free choice that causes us to be saved; once this prerequisite condition is fulfilled God gives us new birth into his family (cp. Eph. 1:13). [For more on our spiritual birth, see Appendix 1: “The Permanence of Christian Salvation”.]

“out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

1:4. “in heaven.” It is important to realize that the inheritance is only said to be stored up in heaven because we have no way to access it now. It is in God’s keeping. This verse is not saying that when we die, we will be in heaven, but just that the treasure is in the hands of God now (see commentary on Matt. 5:12). Our inheritance will be realized when Christ comes back to earth and sets up his kingdom (see commentary on Matt. 5:5, “the meek will inherit the earth”). When Jesus sets up his kingdom on earth, people will be rewarded or punished according as they deserve (see commentary on 2 Cor. 5:10).

1:9. “souls.” Here it refers to saving one’s life. See commentary on Romans 11:3.

1:10. “this salvation.” This is not referring to our new birth salvation, given at the time of believing the gospel, but the “salvation ready to be revealed in *the* last time” (1:5), “at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7).

“who prophesied of the grace.” The grace they mention will be part of the Millennial Kingdom, and it has now come to Christians unexpectedly as part of the Sacred Secret, the “Grace Administration.”

1:11. “searching for what or what kind of time.” The Millennial Kingdom is not well defined in the Old Testament, so the prophets searched for how long it was and what manner of period it was. By the grace of God, many blessings of the Millennial Kingdom, such as the holy spirit, have been given to Christians now.

1:12. “by *the* holy spirit.” The REV has “by *the* spirit,” adding the word “the” even though the Greek text does not have it. The Greek reads *en pneuma* (“in spirit”), but the definite article is not needed in prepositional phrases to make the noun definite. Daniel Wallace writes: “There is no need for the article to be used to make the object of a

preposition definite. ...This is recognized by most grammarians.” (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 247). [For more information, see commentary on Matthew 23:43). [For more information on the uses of “Holy Spirit”, see Appendix 6: “Usages of ‘Spirit’”.]

“look.” The Greek word is *parakuptō* (#3879 παρακύπτω), and it means to stoop down or towards something in order to look at it, or to look at something with the head bowed forward or with the body bent over. It is also used metaphorically for looking at or into something carefully or intently. There is a metaphorical use of the verb in which it is used for a rapid or cursory glance, and some commentators have taken that to be the sense in this verse. Is this verse saying that angels want to be able to look intently into how God planned it so that people before us actually served us via their obedience and faith, or is it saying, like the NET translation, that since angels cannot really see how God planned it all, these are “things angels long to catch a glimpse of.” Since it is difficult to make a choice, it seemed better to go with the middle ground meaning of *parakuptō*, to look, which can mean to look intently or to glance at (see commentary on John 20:5).

1:13. “gird up the loins of your mind.” It is difficult to translate this idiom. It comes from the biblical culture in which standard outer garb for men was a long, ankle-length robe. The robe provided warmth, shelter from the elements, and could be (and often was) a blanket at night (cp. Exod. 22:27). Merchants would pull up the robe at the waist, tuck it in, and create a kind of pocket they could keep things in. The long robe would get in the way when a person needed to move fast or work hard, so he would gather it up and tie it at the waist so it would be short and out of the way. That is why so many versions have a translation such as, “prepare your mind for action,” or “prepare your mind for work.” Those translations are certainly acceptable, but we thought it preferable to keep the idiom, because the picture applies in so many instances. The point seems much deeper than just “prepare for action.” It is looking at the things that are hindering you and figuring out how to deal with them so you can be effective for the Lord.

1:14. “be conformed.” The word translated “be conformed” comes from the Greek *suschēmatisō* (#4964 συσχηματίζω) in the middle voice. Usually we think of the middle voice as the subject performing the action upon itself; e.g., “he hanged himself” (Matt. 27:5). However, this is the *permissive middle* where the subject allows or permits something to be done *to* itself, or *for* itself (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). The sense would then be, “do not allow yourselves to be conformed to your former lusts.”

1:16. “Be holy, for I am holy.” This quotation appears several times in the Old Testament. Cp. Leviticus 11:44, 45; 19:2.

1:17. “Since.” The Greek reads “if.” This is a first class conditional sentence in Greek, which assumes the “if” clause to be true for sake of argument. Cp. NIV translation.

1:19. “without blemish.” See commentary on Ephesians 1:4.

1:21. “out from among the dead.” See Romans 4:24. Wuest: “out from among those who are dead.”

1:22. “soul.” The Greek word often translated “soul” is *psuchē* (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it is used more broadly of the individual himself while including his thoughts and emotions. Thus, while the verse could read something such as, “having purified yourselves” (HCSB; cp. NAB, NIV), the use of the word “soul” points us to the fact that the godly

person has worked hard to purify his mental and emotional life. Romans 2:9 contains a similar use of *psuchē*. [For more complete information on *psuchē*, see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

This verse makes it clear that we purify our mental and emotional life by obeying the “truth,” which includes the written Word of God as well as any direct revelation we have received, and also includes things that we discover from science (genuine science!) are true about God’s creation. Many mentally and emotionally unstable, insecure, or uncertain people have been greatly helped by adjusting their lifestyle and acting on the truth that they know.

“brotherly affection.” The Greek is *philadelphia* (#5360 φιλαδελφία), a compound Greek word made up of *philos* (a strong liking, a friendship; see commentary on John 21:15) and *adelphos* (#80 ἀδελφός), which means “brother.” It is the strong bond of friendship that exists between brothers.

1:23. “seed.” The Greek word is *spora* (#4701 σπορά), and it means “the sowing of seed,” and by extension, “seed” or that which is sown. When a person acts on Romans 10:9, and confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead, he is “born again.” This birth is real, and involves God spiritually sowing his nature (or His seed), holy spirit, into the individual. Like God who gave it, the spiritual seed is “imperishable.” This should be a great source of comfort to every Christian, because the New Birth is irrevocable--it cannot be undone, and it guarantees salvation and everlasting life. God sows His imperishable seed into each Christian by creating it in him, which is why, upon being born again, each Christian is a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17).

“born again.” Through the centuries of the Christian era, there has been a huge debate about whether a Christian can lose his salvation. We assert Scripture teaches that when a person is born again of God’s holy spirit, his salvation is guaranteed, and he is not in danger of the “Second Death” (Rev. 20:12-15). Salvation is of ultimate importance to every human being, since those who are saved will live forever and those who are not will be annihilated in the Lake of Fire [For annihilation, see commentary on Rev. 20:10]. Therefore, God has spent considerable time on the issue of the permanence of salvation and has approached it from many different angles, so we must do the same, and take some time to expound the issue. [For more information on the permanence of Christian salvation, see Appendix 1: “The Permanence of Christian Salvation.”]

1:24. Quoted from Isaiah 40:6-8.

Chapter 2

2:1. “and.” Figure of speech, *polysyndeton*, “many ands” (See Bullinger, *Figures*).

2:2. “the pure milk of the word.” The Greek adjective *logikos* (#3050 λογικός) is related to *logos*, word. There is quite a controversy over this word, with some commentators and versions attesting it should be translated “spiritual” (ESV, NIV, RSV), while some holding that “spiritual” does not make as much sense here and thus asserting that it is related to the Word (KJV, NASB, YLT). Robertson simply gives arguments from both sides without drawing a conclusion. Lenski argues quite forcibly that “Word-milk” (i.e., the milk of the Word) is the correct meaning, and the one to be preferred in this context, which refers to the Word in 1:23 and seems to make more sense in reference

to the babies in the verse, who were in need of “the milk of the word.” We have gone with “the pure milk of the word” because it does seem to fit the context well, and is more concrete than “spiritual milk,” which is not clear in its reference. It should be noted that the only other occurrence of this Greek word is in Romans 12:1, where it is most often translated “spiritual” service. However, first, if it is “spiritual” in the context of Romans 12:1 it need not necessarily be “spiritual” here. Second, perhaps “service related to the Word” would be better in Romans 12:1 also.

“pure.” The Greek word is *adolos* (#97 ἄδολος), which means, regarding people, “without guile, honest” and regarding things, “pure, unadulterated.” Interestingly, verse 1 tells us to put away “guile (dishonesty)”, and this verse, verse two, tells us to desire the “guileless, honest” milk of the Word. The Word of God, unlike the words of man, contains no guile, no dishonesty.

2:6. Quoted from Isaiah 28:16.

“Look!” The Greek word is *idou* (#2400 ἰδοῦ), and it is used to get our attention. See commentary on Matthew 1:20 (“Look!).

“put to shame.” See commentary on Romans 9:33.

2:7. Quoted from Psalm 118:22.

2:8. Quoted from Isaiah from 8:14.

2:9. “chosen people.” Quoted from Isaiah 43:20. The word for “people” is *genos* (#1085 γένος) and it could be translated “family,” “class/kind,” or “group” (Cp. BDAG). The sense of the word simultaneously points to our common heritage from God as our Father, that we are within our own class as we are the Church, and that together we form a distinct group. The translation “race” is incorrect and unhelpful; the people of God are not set apart based on any racial terms (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

“royal priesthood.” Quoted from Exodus 19:6.

“holy nation.” Quoted from Exodus 19:6.

“a people for God’s own possession.” An allusion from Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, and 26:18.

“glorious attributes.” The Greek is *arete* {ar-et'-ay} (#703 ἀρετή), which is a word with many meanings, including, “a virtuous course of thought, feeling and action; virtue or moral goodness; any particular moral excellence, as modesty or purity. Due to the many different meanings and shades of meaning in the word, translations vary greatly. “Praises” (KJV; NIV); “excellencies” (ESV, ASV); “mighty acts” (NRSV); “fame” (Lenski). “Glorious attributes” is contributed by Meyer (Meyer’s Commentary). “Greco-Roman publics would in the main be conditioned to hear a stress on performance, which of course would elicit praise” (BDAG lexicon).

2:10. “not a people.” The Greek phrase is, *ou laos* (οὐ λαός; pronounced oo lah-os'), which, because Greek does not have the indefinite article (“a”), can mean either “no people” or “not a people.” The impact of this can only be fully understood when we realize that Israel was “the People of God,” and were referred to as “the People” (cp. Matt. 2:4; 26:3; Luke 19:47; John 11:50; Acts 4:8, 25; 12:11; 13:17; 21:28; 26:17, 23; 28:17; Rom. 15:10, 11; Heb. 7:11; 2 Pet. 2:1). While Israel was “the People,” in stark contrast the Gentiles did not even classify as people; they were “no-people,” and certainly not “a people.” The double meaning of the Greek makes exact translation into English difficult. If we translate the phrase as “no people” or “no-people” (cp. ASV, ERV, Rotherham, RSV), we get the extra-derogatory sense that a non-Israelite did not even

classify as a person. If we translate the phrase as “not a people” (ESV; HCSB; KJV; NASB; NET) we get that before the saved Gentiles were brought into God’s family, they were not “a people,” not a group that God even recognized. Both “no people” and “not a people” apply in this situation, and the Greek has the advantage that the one phrase means both things, so a Greek reader could see both meanings at once. In contrast, we in English have to pick a reading to go in the text, and explain that there can also be a second meaning.

2:11. “soul.” In this verse, the word “soul” encompasses several of its meanings. Fleshly desires wage war against our mental state, our attitude and emotions, and against “us,” against our persons.

The Greek word often translated “soul” is *psuchē* (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay'), and *psuchē* has a large number of meanings. Any good Greek lexicon will show many of the ways that *psuchē* can be translated. For example, some of the meanings in the BDAG Greek-English lexicon are: that which animates animal and human life; life; that which possesses life; the person himself; and the seat and center of the inner human life in its many and varied aspects, which includes desires, the seat of enjoyment, and the emotions and feelings. As well as our emotions and feelings, *psuchē* includes our attitude. [For more information on “soul” and its uses, see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul.’”]

2:12. See commentary on 2:15, “of foolish men.”

“make sure.” The verb is technically “having,” thus, “having good behavior,” but because it is linked in the sentence with the imperative *apechesthai* (abstain; v. 11), it also has an imperative force (cp. J. R. Michaels, *The Word Biblical Commentary*).

2:15. “of foolish men.” This is referring back to the Gentiles in verse 12, who speak evil against Christians as evildoers. The Greek has the article, *the* foolish men (Vincent, *Word Studies*). In their ignorance, men like this will speak against the church as evildoers in order to justify not becoming Christians. God tells us to live in such a way that evil speakers may see our righteous behavior in the very areas they are speaking against us, and that by our doing good we may silence their accusations and rob them of their excuses.

2:16. “Live as free.” The grammar of this phrase is difficult because the Greek phrase simply starts “as free.” Scholars have suggested many different translations and ways of constructing the sentence, including tying it back to verse 13, or connecting it with the next verse, verse 17. Thankfully, the point of the verse is clear. A common, and logical, construction is that the opening phrase is a kind of ellipsis, the verb being left out to emphasize “free.” In that case, “Live as free” is a good translation.

The Roman world was acutely aware of the value of freedom and the burden of being a slave. Peter uses that awareness very powerfully here. He starts in 2:13 by saying we are to be subject to, or submit to, human authorities such as kings and governors, which would indicate we were like slaves, but then he moves forward to “as free people” in verse 16 to emphasize that we are actually free, but then makes the seemingly ironic statement that we are slaves of God. Christians live in the irony that we are “free” in Christ but “slaves” of God, bought and paid for with the blood of his Son.

“slaves.” The Greek word is *doulos* (#1401 δούλος), and it was used both of slaves and servants. Here, “slaves” fits best since it is being used in contrast to people who are “free.” [For more information on *doulos*, see commentary on Romans 1:1, “servant”].

2:18. “Household slaves.” The Greek word is *oiketēs* (#3610 οικέτης), and it literally means one who is a member of a household (from *oikos*, house). However, it was used of household slaves and servants. In this context it seems to clearly refer to slaves, because it is contrasted with “masters” (*despotēs*). Furthermore, the situation with the *oiketēs* seems to be that he or she is not free to leave, but has to endure the harsh, perverse, and even dishonest ways of the master.

“masters.” The Greek is *despotēs* (#1203 δεσπότης) means master or lord, and it refers to someone who has legal control and authority over others, such as subjects or slaves (cp. 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:9). See commentary on Luke 2:29.

“reasonable.” See commentary on 1 Timothy 3:3.

“unfair.” The Greek word is *skolios* (#4646 σκολιός), and it literally means “crooked” or “curved” and was used of roads and rivers [it is the origin (via new Latin) of our English word scoliosis, a curvature or crookedness of a body part, often the spine]. However, *skolios* was widely used metaphorically to refer to people who were “crooked.” Exactly how any given person who was being discussed was “crooked” was usually easy to tell from the context of the conversation. However, in this verse an exact meaning is not being referred to, but rather the verse is referring in a general way to any “crooked” way a master was being toward a household slave. This makes the verse very difficult, and accounts for the multitude of different ways that different English Bibles translate the word. The meaning includes: being unfair, unjust, dishonest, unscrupulous, surly, harsh, unreasonable, cruel, etc. The Theological Dictionary of the NT captures the meaning in this verse: “In 1 Pet. 2:18 the term is perhaps a general ethical concept denoting the perverse master to whom slaves must still show respect. Yet there may also be a specific reference to pagan masters who are still enslaved in idolatry.” The immediate application in this verse is household servants, most of whom were slaves. However, we must see the wider Christian application of this verse, which is anyone who is subject to another according to the laws of God and man. This would include children, employees, etc. Christians are to submit to, and show respect to, those who are over them, even if those people do not actually deserve that respect by the way they live.

2:22. Quoted from Isaiah 53:9.

2:24. Quoted from Isaiah 53:5.

“Tree.” The Greek word is *xulon* (#3586 ξύλον pronounced zoo'-lon) and it means a tree, log, a piece of timber (1 Cor. 3:12), a piece of wood (Rev. 18:12), or something made from wood such as a beam, a cross, a club (Mark 14:48), or even the stocks that Paul’s feet were placed in (Acts 16:24). However, *xulon* can mean “tree,” and Peter is making the point that the religious leaders had taken the Messiah and hanged him on a “tree” as if he was accursed of God. That does not mean it was a literal tree that Jesus was crucified on, and Peter’s audience understood that. (See commentary on Acts 5:30, “tree”).

“by whose stripes you were healed.” This is a quotation of Isaiah 53:5 and a promise of future healing. It is a fairly common idiom in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages that when an event was absolutely going to happen in the future, it was spoken of as if it had already occurred in the past. This linguistic feature may be started due to the fact that it is sometimes hard to express that a future event is certain to happen. Many times when we simply say something “will” happen, it does not happen. One way the Semitic languages avoided that problem and communicated that a future event was really

going to happen was by idiomatically speaking of it as if it already had happened. In the Old Testament, dozens of verses about future events are written in the past tense, and that is the case here in 1 Peter 2:24 and also with some other New Testament verses such as Ephesians 2:6 [For more explanation and examples of the prophetic perfect, see commentary on Ephesians 2:6].

The phrase, “And by his bruises we were healed” (Tanakh; Jewish Publication Society) is Isaiah’s prophecy and promise of future healing. Peter’s quotation of Isaiah is not word for word, and for example he changes “we were healed” to “you were healed,” but that is presumably so the Gentiles in Peter’s audience were included. Nevertheless, the quotation is exact enough to be clearly recognized as a genuine quotation.

Isaiah’s statement was a promise to Israel that in the future everyone would be healed by the Messiah. At the time Isaiah wrote (around 700 BC), Jesus had not yet paid for the sins and sicknesses of mankind. Israel was awaiting their Messiah, and knew from their own Hebrew language and idiom that Isaiah was promising that at some point in the future the Messiah would heal everyone (that is, every saved person who was in the Messianic Kingdom). Isaiah’s promise that the Messiah would heal people was an “absolute” promise, that is, it was a promise that in the future the Messiah would heal everyone, period. He would not just heal “those who had faith to be healed,” or those for whom God had a special purpose. He would heal everyone. This point becomes very clear when all the prophetic books—Isaiah and all the other Old Testament prophets—are read.

It is very important to understand the prophetic perfect idiom and what Isaiah was saying because Peter is quoting Isaiah and bringing the force of what Isaiah was saying forward to us. Thus 1 Peter 2:24, in quoting Isaiah, is saying that everyone’s healing is still assured. Peter was not changing what Isaiah said. Isaiah was making a promise that at some point in the future everyone would be healed, and Peter is reaffirming that promise. It is important to understand Isaiah’s promise because many people in the “Faith Movement” believe that 1 Peter 2:24 gives people a right to claim healing now. That is not true. That “right” did not exist in Isaiah’s time, and it does not exist now just because Peter quoted Isaiah. The evidence of that fact should be apparent because many people, even those who have demonstrated great trust in God throughout their lives, get sick and are not healed by “faith” (trust). In fact, many people who have been miraculously healed in their lives and therefore should have great faith for healing, are not healed of subsequent sicknesses. Neither the grammar of the text, the context, nor human experience support the teaching that Christ’s work on the cross means people can now “claim their healing by faith.” That does not mean that Christ does not heal some people now—he certainly does (more on that later), but 1 Peter 2:24 does not confer upon people the right to “claim healing;” it is a promise that in the future everyone will be healed.

When we read what Isaiah and the other prophetic books say about healing, it is clear that they did not promise healing at the time they were written, but promised that healing would come in the future, in the Messianic Kingdom. In fact, the prophecies of physical healing are part of the larger prophetic picture of “healing” that will happen in the Messianic Kingdom. According to the prophecies, in Jesus’ kingdom, people, animals, the land, and bodies of water will all be healed, and earth will become a Paradise once again. Furthermore, this will not happen piece by piece over a long period of time as people have faith, but happens all at once on “that day,” the Day when Christ establishes

his kingdom on earth. Note, for example, how Isaiah 29:17-20 ties together the healing of people, the land, and even social ills.

Isaiah 29:17-20

¹⁷In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field and the fertile field seem like a forest?

¹⁸In **that day** the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.

¹⁹Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰The ruthless will vanish, the mockers will disappear, and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—

The prophets painted a wonderful picture of the future Messianic Kingdom on earth.

- There will be no war (Isa. 2:4; 9:4–7; 60:18; Hos. 2:18; Mic. 4:3, 4; Zech. 9:9, 10).
- The believers will be healthy, not sick (Isa. 29:18; 32:3,4; 33:24; 35:5,6; 57:19; Jer. 33:6; Mal. 4:2).
- The land will be healed so there will be no hunger (Isa. 25:6; 30:23–26; 32:15; 35:1–7; 41:18–20; 44:3; 51:3; Jer. 31:5,11–14; Ezek. 47:1–12; Hos. 2:21,22; Joel 2:18–26; Amos 9:13).
- Mankind will live safely on the earth (Isa. 11:6–9; 32:18; 54:14–17; 60:11,17,18; 65:17–25; Jer. 23:4; 30:10; 33:6; Ezek. 28:26; 34:25–31; Mic. 5:4,5; Zeph. 3:13–17).
- The house of Israel will know God (Isa. 29:23, 24; Jer. 31:33, 34; Ezek. 11:18–20), and Christians will “know fully” (1 Cor. 13:12).
- The gift of holy spirit will be poured out from heaven (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; Joel 2:28, 29; Zech. 12:10).
- The people will be holy and blessed, and there will be joy (Isa. 4:2–5; 35:10; 51:3; 60:1–22; 61:4–11; 62:1–12; 65:17–25; Jer. 30:18,19; 31:4,12–14). [For more on Christ’s wonderful kingdom on earth, see commentary on Matthew 5:5, “the meek will inherit the earth”].

But how was that wonderful kingdom to come to pass? How were these promises to be made available? After all, the world is in the sad shape that it is because of the sin of Adam, and how could that sin be atoned for? That is where the great prophecy of Isaiah 53 comes in, because it tells us that the Messiah would pay for the sins of the world and make healing available.

Isaiah 53:4, 5, 6, 10,11 (ESV abridged)

⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows...⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed...⁶the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all...¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him...his soul makes an offering for guilt...¹¹by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall

bear their iniquities...he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many....”

Even though the ESV quoted above does not exactly follow the tenses of the Hebrew text, it is helpful to notice how much of the prophecy of Isaiah 53 is in the past tense as if it had already happened. However, as was stated above, that is not because the promises were somehow fulfilled in the past, before 700 BC, but rather because of the prophetic perfect idiom, which is in the text to show us that the promises are guaranteed to come to pass.

Although neither Isaiah 53:5 nor 1 Peter 2:24 somehow confer the “right” to “claim” healing today, God and Jesus do heal. We see that in the book of Acts, and 1 Corinthians 12:9 mentions “gifts of healings.” Many factors play into healing, including trust (faith), the law of sowing and reaping, the spiritual battle, the fallen nature of the world, and the will of God. That is one reason people, even people who have great trust in God, are sometimes healed and sometimes not.

Another reason we know we cannot just “claim” healing is that sickness is a consequence of sin, and we cannot just “claim” that our sins have no consequences. When we read 1 Peter 2:24 we see that the first phrase in the verse, which is about sins, and the second phrase, about sicknesses, are parallel. Jesus bore our sins and healed us by his stripes. The fullness of both of these phrases will be seen in the future.

When Jesus went to the cross, he certainly bore our sins. Yet this does not mean that right now we do not sin, or have no consequences for Adam’s sin and our own sin. The fullness of Christ’s work in atoning for sin will be seen in the future. Furthermore, if a person sins and is in jail, he cannot “just claim” that there would be no consequence to his sin and immediately somehow be out of jail. Similarly, a couple that sins and commits adultery leading to the woman’s getting pregnant cannot “just claim” the sin has no consequence, or a person who sins and commits murder cannot suddenly repent and “just claim” that the sin have no consequence and that life return into the dead body. We cannot “just claim” that sin have no consequence. Sickness is a consequence of sin: sometimes our own sin, sometimes our parent’s sin, sometimes someone else’s sin, and sometimes just Adam’s sin. So just like with the consequences of other sins, we cannot “just claim” that sickness be gone.

Many people who are sick have been made to feel badly about themselves, as if they have no faith, simply because they have not been divinely healed. Job’s miserable comforters had personal beliefs that led them to conclude that Job had a “secret sin,” and they berated him for it even though Job was innocent—it was their beliefs that were wrong. Similarly, many people who belong to churches that teach “if you have faith you will be healed” end up acting like Job’s miserable comforters and, although their intentions are good, they badger, berate, criticize, and even attack other church members who do not get healed of physical and/or mental ailments. Paul warns us: “But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another” (Gal. 5:15).

Another confirmation that we do not have the “right” (the ability) to “claim” healing at will is that the language that would support that kind of doctrine is not in the Bible. For example, it is common to hear people who think they can claim healing and other blessings from God say, “I am believing for....” But that language is not in the

Bible. The simple fact is that phrases such as “believe for,” “believing for,” or “believed for” do not occur in the Bible. In contrast, the phrase “pray for” occurs many times. The difference between “believe for” and “pray for” is important. If I can “believe for” things, then I have the power, which is what the Faith Movement teaches. But if I have to ask God for things and “pray for” them, then He has the power, which is what the Bible teaches. Thankfully, when we pray to God and trust in his power and mercy, God can move in the spiritual world and get us what we are praying for. Actually, many people who receive from God do so, not because of “their believing,” but because they so faithfully prayed for what they wanted.

Someone might say, “But often when people got healed in the Bible, Jesus said, ‘Your faith has made you whole,’ so the person’s faith healed them.” We would answer that “faith” is “trust,” and to be healed, healing has to first be made available by God, which we usually know via revelation. Once healing has been made available to a sick person (which he will usually know by receiving revelation about it), he must then have faith (have trust) in order to appropriate the healing to himself. Jesus did not heal people without revelation first, and we cannot “just claim” healing for ourselves when we are sick. If that were the truth of Scripture, then life would testify to it. However life shows us that even people who are known for their godliness and faith are not able to “just claim” healing for themselves or others, but that they sometimes get sick and must be healed by doctors and/or let the body heal itself.

The truth is that we usually do not understand why one person is healed and another is not, or why a person is healed of one illness but not a subsequent illness, or why a person who is immediately divinely healed of one illness, say the flu, does not also have his teeth and eyesight completely restored at the same time. But this we know: the Word of God has promised many times, and 1 Peter 2:24 is one of them, that there will come a time in the future when every single person will be healed of every single sickness, and we should look forward to that great day with great anticipation. (A very helpful book in understanding the modern “Faith Movement” and how and why it differs from the actual teaching of the Bible is: *A Different Gospel* by D. R. McConnell).

2:25. Quoted from Isaiah 53:6.

“**soul.**” The Greek word often translated “soul” is *psuchē* (#5590 ψυχή; pronounced psoo-kay), and it has a large number of meanings, including the physical life of a person or animal; an individual person; or attitudes, emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Here it is used more broadly of the individual himself, but including life and his thoughts and emotions. Jesus watches over every aspect of our lives. [For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

Chapter 3

3:1. “In the same way.” The Greek word is *homoiōs* (#3668 ὁμοίως, pronounced hō-moy-ōs), and it means “in the same way, likewise, in like manner.” This is one of the places where starting a new a chapter (Chapter 3:1) can detract significantly from the meaning of the Bible. Most people read, “In the same way,” but seeing the new chapter act as if there is a new subject and do not really take the time to ask themselves, “in the same way as what,” and then read back to the start of the subject, which is 2:18,

“household slaves.” The section of 2:18-25 is about household slaves who have “crooked” masters, and how those slaves should behave in a godly manner in less than ideal circumstances. So now 3:1 starts “in the same way,” and instructs women in how to behave when they are married and are in less than ideal circumstances. Thus what is said about the women in 3:1-6 is in addition to how God has told the household slaves to behave in 2:18-25.

3:2. “respectful.” The Greek literally reads, “in fear.” We feel it is most likely a dative of manner and thus is functioning as an adverb. Lenski, however, takes it as the general “fear of God” spoken in 1 Peter 1:16-18. He is right, though, that the behavior of the wife is not necessarily directed solely towards the husband but is also an act of reverence to God.

3:7. “You husbands.” This verse starts a new subject, that of “husbands.” The section and subject, living godly in less than ideal circumstances, started speaking about household slaves in 2:18, then referred to wives in 3:1, and now is referring to husbands.

“In the same way.” The Greek word is *homoios* (#3668 ὁμοίως, pronounced hō-moy-ōs), and it means “in the same way, likewise, in like manner.” When we read, “In the same way,” we must stop and ask ourselves, “in the same way as what?” To answer that question we will have to go back and find the start of the subject and then read to ascertain what God is trying to tell us at that point. Then we add that understanding to our understanding of what God is telling us in 3:7. In this case, the start of the subject is all the way back to 1 Peter 2:18, “household slaves.” The section of 2:18-25 is about household slaves who have “crooked” masters, and how those slaves should behave in a godly manner in less than ideal circumstances. As we continue to read, we find that 3:1 also starts with, “in the same way.” That section of Scripture (3:1-6) is instructing women on how to live godly lives in less than ideal circumstances, such as with an unbelieving husband.

We might be confused at first when we see that this section of Scripture written to husbands begins, “in the same way.” This is due to the fact that there does not seem to be a connection between husbands and household slaves and wives, because the slaves and wives seem to be in a submissive position that husbands are not in. In fact, some commentators have tried to explain away the natural meaning of “in the same way,” by saying in this verse the phrase is only transitional and does not have its ordinary meaning. Commentators such as those assert that husbands are not to submit to wives (cp. notes in ESV Study Bible). However, the Bible says that husbands are to submit to their wives in some areas of the relationship. For one thing, in the Church, husbands and wives are to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21), and although men lead the family, the woman is the “house despot,” (see commentary on 1 Tim. 5:14; *oikodespoteō*, #3616 οἰκοδεσποτέω, which means to rule a household).

In any marriage, the man has certain authority and accompanying responsibilities, and the woman has certain authority and accompanying responsibilities. A man who has an unbelieving or ungodly wife has to learn to live with her in a godly way just as a Christian household slave or godly wife has to learn how to be respectful to an unbelieving or ungodly master or husband. Also, if a husband is simply a tyrant in the house, and does not care about the family or listen to the wife and children, although there may be obedience in the household, there will not be warmth and the family love that really makes life enjoyable and places the husband and wife in agreement, something

important in light of the last phrase of the verse about prayers. In fact, if the husband acts like a tyrant in the house and does not show the mutual submission that the Bible says is part of the family structure, he is in fact ignoring this verse by not living with his wife “in a knowledgeable way,” and certainly not showing her honor, which he could do in part by recognizing the authority God has given her in the house and submitting to that authority.

“in a knowledgeable way.” The Greek is *kata gnōsis* (κατά γνώσις); literally “according to knowledge.” The idea is “according to what you know and understand about your wife and her situation.” This can be ascertained from the context. The word *gnōsis* means both knowledge and understanding, the exact meaning depending on the context. It would not be a bad translation lexically to simply have “live with your wives with understanding.” However, in our culture today, to have “understanding” of someone in the context of an intimate relationship places the emphasis on the mutual mental agreement, accord, and understanding that the couple has for each other. Thus, the modern way we would think about the verse, it would mean the man would “understand” the woman, i.e., what makes her happy, what upsets her, etc. That is one of the meanings in the verse, but there are other important meanings that must not be overlooked. The problem in this verse is that “knowledge” must be understood in light of the biblical culture, not our present one.

The unspoken context of this verse is the biblical culture, which was very hard on women, and especially any women who did not have the support of a husband or strong family, and this is confirmed by the use of the phrase “weaker vessel.” The woman was the “weaker vessel,” the one who was less capable of sustaining herself without the support of a husband and family (see commentary on “weaker vessel”). For most of history women have been abused and ignored by men. At the time of Christ, for example, a woman’s testimony was not even valid in court. That kind of thinking about women ignores the very reason for their creation, that they were to be a helper suitable for man (in contrast to the animals that had been created earlier on day six and were not suitable helpers to man). The New Testament teachings of Christ and the other apostles elevates women in a way that they had never been elevated before. For example, the NT formally recognized that a woman had her “own” husband (1 Cor. 7:2). This negated the polygamy of many ancient cultures, and turned the acceptable sexual dallying of the men in the Greco-Roman culture into “sexual immorality.”

The husband is to live with the wife “in a knowledgeable way,” that means a true knowledge, not the so-called knowledge of women that was accepted as truth in the pagan culture of the first century, that women were inferior to men. The husband who is a man of God must ascertain God’s perspective and heart for women, and also know and act upon that knowledge. In Christ there is neither male nor female because when a person, either male or female, gets born again, that person receives the gift of holy spirit and becomes a spiritually powerful child of God. It is the gift of holy spirit inside a person that gives him or her a holy nature (cp. 2 Pet. 1:4) and enables him or her to walk in the power of the manifestations of holy spirit as set forth in 1 Cor. 12:7-10 (see commentary on those verses). To be truly knowledgeable of his wife, the husband must understand her physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. If he does, he will honor her naturally. If he does not, he should honor her because this verse commands him

to until his knowledge grows to the point the honor is an effortless outflow of his knowledge of her.

In one of the sad turns in history, as the Church developed, the Christian men gradually again reduced the women to subservient roles in the Church, society, and even their own house, and these views were supported by misunderstanding of the text of Scripture (see commentary on Rom. 16:1; 1 Cor. 7:2, 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11, 12).

“giving.” The Greek is *aponemō* (#632 ἀπονέμω), and the definition given in BDAG captures the sense very well: “to grant that which is appropriate in a relationship, assign, show, pay.” It is appropriate for husbands to give honor to their wives for who they are and what they do even as it is appropriate for women to respect and submit to the husband (1 Pet. 3:1ff). This word, “give,” or “grant that which is appropriate,” again strikes out against any culture or system that says women are of little value. It is one more way God elevates women: He shows that they are worthy of honor, and it is a serious mistake, with serious consequences in the Church, family, and society, to fail to see that women are worthy of the honor God says they should be given (see commentary on “honor”).

“honor.” The Greek word is *timē* (#5092 τιμή, pronounced “tee-may”), and it has meanings that relate to price and “honor.” It means the price or value of something, ascribing a value to something, or the price that is paid for something, and it also means “honor,” the honor that someone has or is given, the honor a person has because of their rank or position, or the honor that someone is shown out of respect or reverence.

In the first century culture, which was an “honor-shame” society, honor was a major part of the fabric of society. To be worthy of honor was a tremendous privilege, while to be dishonored was a huge disgrace. For example, to be asked to “move down” in place because you had taken the seat of one more honorable than you was a big disgrace (Luke 14:8-10). The Pharisees and experts in the Law loved the places of honor in the synagogues and at the feasts (Matt. 23:6; Mark 12:39). God will honor those who serve Jesus the Son (John 12:26). Christians are to honor those who deserve honor (Rom. 13:7), and elders who serve in the Church well are to be considered worthy of double honor (1 Tim. 5:17).

Because we do not live in an “honor-shame” society, it can be difficult for us to understand how it worked, but since the first century culture was an “honor-shame” society, we will not really understand the Bible until we do understand it. John Dickson writes: “Honor was universally regarded as the ultimate asset for human beings, and shame the ultimate deficit. ...humility was rarely, if ever, considered virtuous. ...Much of life revolved around ensuring you and your family received public honor and avoided public shame....Humility before the gods, of course, was appropriate, because they could kill you....But humility before an equal or a lesser was morally suspect. It upset the assumed equation: merit demanded honor, thus honor was the proof of merit. Avoiding honor implied a diminishing of merit. It was shameful” (*Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership*, p. 86, 88, 89).

In the Semitic and Greco-Roman culture of the time of Christ, it was dishonoring (a shameful act), for a person to lower himself before someone who was of equal or lesser status. The thinking of the NT era towards a humble person was expressed well by Aristotle, who thought of a humble person, not as someone who was virtuous, but as “the weak and insipid man who poses no threat” (*Humilitas*. p. 89). When we understand the

“honor-shame” society of the first century and see it in light of this verse in Peter, we can see that this command of God for men to give “honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel,” went totally against the grain of the culture. By giving honor to the woman, the woman must be honorable. If a woman was not honorable, then to give her honor was a shameful act.

Women were generally held in dishonor in both the Semitic culture and the Greco-Roman culture. They were considered to be physically, mentally, morally, and emotionally inferior to men. Thus, for a man to “honor” his wife in the biblical culture would lower the man in the eyes of the society around him. Thus this verse became one more command of God that caused Christians to have to make a choice between obeying God and following their culture (cp. commentary on Rom. 12:2).

We must realize that when God said in this verse that husbands were to give “honor” to their wives, the words would have had a huge impact upon both the men and women—a much larger impact that they have in Western societies which are not honor-shame societies and which do not think of women as inferior. For the women, this command elevated them in the eyes of their family and society. For the men, it usually dishonored them in the eyes of the society around them. But for both the men and women who were believers, it taught that humility was not a weakness, but a virtue.

Sadly, historically, this command to honor wives was ignored. We would expect that the pagan culture would pay no attention to it, but it did not take long after the original apostles died for the Church to again take the attitude of the surrounding culture. Thus, by the time of the post-Nicene Church fathers, women were again considered inferior to men. Any supposed “honor” they were shown, which usually showed up as either decoration (i.e., fancy clothes, etc.), protection, or the respect demanded of children and/or people of less status in society, was not the real honor of actual participation in the Church, society, and the family that God intended.

Men and women, and husbands and wives, are to honor each other, for we are all “vessels” created by God, each with its own abilities and purposes, none more valuable to God than another (cp. 1 Cor. 12:22-25; Rom. 12:10).

“weaker vessel.” The Greek translated “weaker” is *asthenēs* (#772 ἀσθενής), which means “weak, sick, infirm,” and the Greek word for “vessel” is *skeuos* (#4632 σκεῦος), which literally can refer to a container of any material, the context determining the meaning of the container, and it can also refer more generally to “things” or possessions (cp. Matt. 12:29). *Skeuos* was used figuratively for the human body, which holds the soul (life), and that is its use in this verse and others in the NT (cp. Acts 9:15; Rom. 9:22; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:21). We must notice that in this verse, both the man and the woman are “vessels,” and thus the creations of God who need to be obedient to Him.

In this verse, the woman is referred to as the weaker vessel, and the meaning of that phrase is simple and straightforward: the woman is not as physically strong as the male. However, also the phrase was used in the Greek culture for the effect of that weakness; the woman was less capable of making a living on her own without family support (cp. notes in A. Nyland, *The Source NT*). Thus a woman without the support of a family or husband was often forced to survive by prostituting herself.

In the era before force-multiplying devices such as engines, and equalizers such as guns, brute strength was essential for most of the things that led to survival: personal protection, plowing, transportation, and building houses. The need for protection was

especially acute in ancient societies because police forces were almost unknown. People survived by being physically strong and by being part of a strong social system, usually a family. Thus, it made perfect sense culturally to compare a person or nation that was weak and unable to protect itself to a woman, as Egypt is in Isaiah 19:16. A woman on her own was very likely to be molested, which is why Boaz had to tell his reapers not to touch Ruth, a woman without family protection (Ruth 2:9).

We need to understand that the Bible referring to a woman as the weaker vessel was not derogatory in any way. It was a simple truth, and it was designed to get the attention of the husbands who were reading this passage of Scripture and point out in a gracious way that a woman needed and deserved the help and support of her husband to be safe and supported. Thus in this passage we see God's love for women and His desire to see them supported in areas where they need it so that they can then graciously and fully contribute the things that they have to offer the family, the Church, and society. In contrast to the ancient culture (and many modern ones) in which men do not take the time to understand their wives, or make the effort to genuinely support them, 1 Peter 3:7 commands men to get to understand their wives and the situation they are in and honor them, rather than using them or abusing them.

One of the terrible things that has happened in the Church when it comes to women is that the male-dominated Semitic and Greco-Roman culture surrounding the Christians was more influential than the actual text of the Bible. For example, Aristotle asserted the women were in every way inferior to men except sexually, and that kind of teaching and belief permeated the culture at the time of the early Church. Thus it did not take too many years for the Church to be dominated by men who once again reduced women to practically the status of slaves. Women were considered physically, emotionally, and even morally inferior to men (the writings of the Church Fathers make this abundantly clear), and thus women were excluded from positions of authority in all facets of life, even in their own homes. As the Church developed in the early centuries, it was even thought that sexual intercourse with a woman negatively impacted a man's spirituality, which was a primary reason that the Church (later the Roman Catholic Church) came to have a celibate clergy.

Sadly, the attitude that women are inferior to men still continues in the Church. For example, based on Church tradition and the mistranslations of verses such as Romans 16:1, 1 Corinthians 14:34, and 1 Timothy 2:12, in many denominations women cannot be ordained or teach. Furthermore, there are Christian commentaries that assert that because the Bible says the woman is the weaker vessel, women are inferior to men in ways other than just physically (“Weaker? ...refers to physical or emotional weakness”; *Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 1983; “Women are weaker in body than men, weaker also in mind...;” *The Biblical Illustrator*, 2006).

If the Church is ever to operate in the love of God and power of the holy spirit, we must recognize women as the gift they are and that God created them to be. God created people either male and female (Gen. 5:2), and both sexes have giftings, responsibilities, and certain authority in the Church and family. The Church, the family, and society will never be everything God intended it to be until both men and women can and do walk in the fullness of what God has given them.

“so that.” The Greek phrase is *eis to mē* (εἰς τὸ μὴ), a phrase which, in this context indicates result, not purpose. It is perhaps more literally rendered, “to the end that,” but

“so that” expresses the meaning well. The point is not that the man shows honor to the wife just so his prayers will be better answered, but rather as he lives with his wife in knowledge and honor, the result will be that his prayers are better answered.

“prayers are not hindered.” It is clear in both the Old Testament and New Testament that if a person lives in disregard of God and His commands, that person will not receive the blessings of God (cp. Deut. 31: 16-18; Isa. 1:11-15; 58:1-9; 59:1-8; 66:1-4; Jer. 7:21-29; 14:10-12; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 3:9-12; 6:6-8; Rom. 2:13-16; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). Jesus understood that, and so he told people that if they were making an offering at the altar in the Temple, but remembered that someone had something against them, they should stop making the offering and go be reconciled to the person. Then they could come back and finish offering the gift. (Matt. 5:23, 24). From that we see that Jesus understood Amos 5:24 and Micah 6:8, that righteousness and justice far outweighed sacrifice (i.e., religion, and all its “requirements”). Malachi 2:13-16 made it clear that if a man did not treat his wife in a godly way, God will not pay attention to his offerings, or accept them (Mal. 2:13).

Not only is the Bible clear that God will not look with favor on the offerings of anyone who disregards righteous and just behavior, the Bible also says that there is more effectiveness in prayer when more than one person is praying for something. “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:19). A husband who does not live with his wife in knowledge and honor will definitely be hindered in his prayer life both because he is not obeying God, and also because he is not “in harmony with” his wife, so they will not pray well together. It is a “happy coincidence” of language that the Greek word translated “agree” in Matthew 18:19 is *sumphōneō* (#4856 συμφωνέω) “to agree together,” and our English word “symphony” comes from the Greek word *sumphōneō*. When the husband and wife live together with love, respect, honor, and knowledge and understanding of each other, then they are like a beautiful symphony, each instrument different, but playing in tune with the other and making music together that is more wonderful than either instrument could make on its own. In light of the truth revealed in this verse, it is stupid for a man to live in disharmony with his wife if something could make the marriage better (sometimes this means the marriage needs the help of a trained counselor).

The context of this verse shows that “prayers” (*proseuchē*; #4335 προσευχή, the general word for prayer to God) is everything that any husband and wife would pray for in the course of marriage and life. Some commentators have suggested that the context dictates that the primary meaning of prayers here is prayers for the salvation of the wife (since 3:1-6 seem to be primarily about an unsaved man, so this must be prayers for the wife), but that is not the meaning of the verse. The women were living in a culture that already elevated men, so Peter would not have to make the point that husbands deserved honor. Verse seven notes that the wife is already an “heir together of the grace of [everlasting] life.” The men were living in a culture which so disregarded women that it would not occur to the man to give the woman honor, or consider his wife his primary prayer partner, which of course she is. She and the husband are “one flesh,” and in the eyes of God there is no more perfect prayer partner, nor are two people supposed to be more in agreement, more “in harmony,” than a man and his wife. This verse is not saying the man is to honor his wife so his prayers for her salvation are answered, it is saying that

a man is to dwell with his wife in knowledge and honor so that she is in fact in harmony with him and his (and her) prayers are not hindered.

It is stated in the verse in the word “your” (plural in the Greek), that if the man and wife are not in harmony, her prayers are hindered too. But it should not be lost on us that as the head of the family, God places upon the husband the primary responsibility for there being harmony in the marriage. Nevertheless, wives can be disobedient too, and if a wife is in disharmony with her husband, she should not resist God, but do what it takes to come into harmony with him.

In closing the commentary on 3:7, it bears repeating and clarifying that it is commonly taught that the New Testament is oppressive towards women. Nothing could be further from the truth. Especially in light of the non-Christian first-century cultural attitudes toward woman, the New Testament liberated women and elevated them to a status that they had never enjoyed before.

3:10-12. Quoted from Psalm 34:12-16.

3:10. “deceitful speech.” Cp. BDAG’s translation, “speak deceitfully” and NIV: “deceitful speech.” Literally, the Greek reads, “keep your lips... from not to speak deceit.” The word for deceit, *dolos* (#1388 δόλος), is a noun, so the sense is, do not speak any *deceitful thing*. The translation “keep your lips from deceitful speech” captures the meaning of “do not speak any deceitful thing.”

3:13. “zealots for that which is good.” In the Greek the word for “zealots” is a noun and not the verb form. However, most versions read something like, “be zealous for what is good.” Instead of calling us to a state of mind, “being zealous” (verb), He is calling us to the identity of being a zealot (noun)—not in the sense of being ultranationalists, but rather, enthusiasts for what is good.

3:14. “do not fear them.” There is a question as to whether the genitive in this phrase is subjective (“their fear,” cp. KJV; NASB; NIV) or objective (“fear them,” cp. ESV; NAB; NET). The context of 1 Peter, however, strongly points towards the objective meaning, “do not fear them.” The book is very much about being persecuted and enduring under suffering, in the immediate context Peter is speaking of those who would “harm you” for doing good and “suffering for righteousness sake.” It would be a strange break in thought to say “do not fear what they fear,” but an encouragement to not fear *them* makes perfect sense. Interestingly, this phrase is alluding to Isaiah 8:12, which clearly has the subjective sense of not fearing what other people fear. In this case Peter is not directly quoting from the O.T. passage but using its language to make a new point in his own context (Lenski).

Quoted from Isaiah 8:12.

3:16. “put to shame.” See commentary on Romans 9:33.

3:17. “if the will of God should will it.” It may sometimes be the will of God for one to suffer for doing good. The next verse, 3:18, explains why by using an explanatory “for,” showing how it was God’s will for Christ to suffer to bring about the much greater good of bringing us to God (cp. 4:1). The Greek of this phrase employs the figure of speech polyptoton—“if the will of God should will it” (Cp. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*). This structure deemphasizes God’s role in willing that one should suffer for doing good; it could have easily been written with *theos* (God) as the subject, “if God wills.” But by not making God the subject but rather the will of God the subject, He is a step removed from the action, giving the sense that He is slightly distanced from the statement. The philosophical notion of *primary* and *secondary will* is helpful for understanding this

verse—God’s primary will is that no one should suffer, ever; but His secondary will is that, given the fallen situation, suffering must be permitted at times to achieve the greatest good. It is not contradictory for one to hold both wills simultaneously. Interestingly, God can *will* for one to suffer for good but not *want* it to happen.

Furthermore, the verb for “will,” *thelō* (#2309 θέλω), is in the optative mood, expressing scant possibility. Specifically, this is an instance of the Conditional Optative, “used to indicate a *possible* condition in the future, usually a remote possibility” (cp. Wallace, *Exegetical Syntax*). This verse shows us that it may be the will of God that one suffer for doing good and yet simultaneously portrays this as a remote possibility, reminding us that we must never be too quick to claim God’s will as the cause of our suffering. (See also 1 Pet. 4:19).

3:19. “heralded his victory.” Jesus was “put to death in *the* flesh, but made alive in *the* spirit” as per 1 Peter 3:18. This is in accordance with the pattern revealed in 1 Corinthians 15, which says that the flesh, which is corruptible, is changed (1 Cor. 15:52). The natural body is sown in death, and what is raised is a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). Jesus was raised from the dead as a “life giving spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45), or “in *the* spirit” (1 Pet. 3:18). What did Jesus do when he was raised from the dead and had a new, spiritual body? Sometime after he was raised from the dead, he went to the “prison” where the spirits who had defied God before the Flood of Noah were held (the prison is called Tartarus; see commentary on 2 Pet. 2:4). In Tartarus, Jesus “heralded” his resurrection and victory to the imprisoned demons. The word “heralded” is the Greek word *kerussō*, “to be a herald; to officiate as herald; to proclaim after the manner of a herald...to publish, proclaim openly something which has been done” (Thayer). To “proclaim victory” (Gingrich).

It is sometimes taught that Jesus went to see the spirits in prison during the three days and nights between his death and resurrection, but that is clearly not the case. During that time he was “dead;” not alive in any form. 1 Peter 3:18 and 19 teach that he went “in spirit.” He got his spiritual body and became a life-giving spirit at his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:45), so it was after his resurrection that he went to Tartarus. Furthermore, he did not “preach” to these imprisoned demons, as if they could have believed and been released. They had defied God in the days of Noah by working to create a fallen race (the Nephilim; see commentary on “when they sinned” 2 Peter 2:4), and were imprisoned as a result. They did their best to keep the Messiah from coming and to defeat God, but the Messiah came and achieved victory for God, so Jesus went to the prison and heralded his victory to the demons there.

3:20. “souls.” Here, “souls” refers to people. This is similar to Acts 2:41. [For a more complete explanation of “soul,” see Appendix 7: “Usages of ‘Soul’”].

Chapter 4

4:1. “the same way of thinking.” The Greek is *ennoia* (#1771 ἐννοια), and means “the content of mental processing, thought, knowledge, insight (BDAG Lexicon). For this verse BDAG has “same way of thinking.” This general definition is very good in this context. The KJV “mind” is not as good, because “mind” is generally translated from the Greek *nous*, and refers to the mind itself, not specifically the products of the mind. Also,

while good, “purpose” (NASB); “attitude” (NIV); and “intention” (NRSV); all seem too specific, although the use of one English word to translate one Greek word is always a valuable goal and should be adhered to when possible.

4:4. “reckless actions.” See commentary on “recklessness” in Titus 1:6.

“defame.” The Greek verb *blasphēmeō* (#987 βλασφημέω) means showing disrespect to a person or deity, and/or harming his, her, or its reputation. [For more on *blasphēmeō*, see commentary on Matt. 9:3].

4:6. “are now dead.” This verse is making the simple statement that there are people who had heard the Good News preached who have died and are now dead. The verse is only confusing to some people because so many Christians believe that when a person dies he is not actually dead, but is alive. The Amplified Bible does a good job with the translation, and has a simple and accurate footnote. The text of the verse reads, “. . .the good news (the Gospel) was preached [in their lifetime] even to the dead. . . .” The footnote reads, “Most commentators interpret this preaching to be a past event, done not after these people had died, but while they were still alive.” When people are dead they are totally dead, and cannot hear the Gospel.

4:7. “the end [telos] of all things.” This is not referring to the *utter end* of all things, because life will go on in the new kingdom. The word *teleute* would have been the proper word for a temporal end; but the word here is *telos*, the “goal” (Lenski). BDAG defines *telos* as, “last in a series; the last part of a process; the goal toward which a movement is being directed, end, goal, outcome.” The last part of the series of God’s great end goal has come; we are in the last part of the process, the Grace Administration, waiting for nothing but Christ’s return. (Compare NIV’s translation of *telos* in 1 Cor. 10:11: “The fulfillment [telos] of the ages has come.”)

4:8. Quoted from Proverbs 10:12.

4:9. “hospitality.” See commentary on Romans 12:13.

4:10. “many-sided.” The Greek is *poikilos* (#4164 ποικίλος) and means, pertaining to that which exists in a variety of kinds or various modes, diversified, manifold, varied. “Many –sided communicates very well, and was used by Charles Williams in his New Testament. A less literal, but meaningful translation, comparing the grace of God to a gemstone, would be “many faceted.”

4:11. “words.” The Greek word is *logion* (#3051 λόγιον; pronounced log'-ee-on), and it is the diminutive of *logos*, “word” or “message.” Literally, it is “little words.” See commentary on Acts 7:38.

4:16. “Christian.” [For more information on the use of “Christian” in the New Testament, see commentary on Acts 11:26].

4:18. Quoted from the LXX version of Proverbs 11:31. The Hebrew reads, “If the righteous will be rewarded in the earth, How much more the wicked and the sinner!” (NASB). See Lenski.

4:19. “according to the will of God.” It is never the will of God that people suffer. However, it is the will of God that people obey him, and sometimes we suffer for it. For example, 2 Timothy 3:12 says that everyone who lives a godly life will be persecuted. It is God’s will that people live godly lives, and God knows that because the Devil is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4) godly people will suffer. God would rather have His people suffer for godliness than attempt to escape the persecution and troubles by living an ungodly life, so our suffering can be said to be “according to the will of God.” There will

be a day when the wicked will be punished and God's people will live in joy in the Messiah's kingdom. God promises: "and he [God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more; the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). The joy we will have in the next life is the will of God for us for all time, but it is not available now due to the evil around us.

"souls." In this context, the "soul" refers to the human life. This is a similar use to Romans 11:3. [For a more complete explanation of "soul," see Appendix 7: "Usages of 'Soul'"].

Chapter 5

5:4. "the Chief Shepherd." Jesus is the "Chief Shepherd," shepherding both the shepherds he has appointed over others, as well as shepherding his flock in general.

When translating from one language to another, such as translating from Greek to English, there are some "happy coincidences" and also some times when literal translations can make understanding more difficult. An example of a "happy coincidence" occurs in Matthew 25:14ff in the parable of the talents. In the biblical world, a "talent" is a unit of weight (and hence money), and we understand that, but when translated into English a "talent" is also a unique ability that a person has been gifted with. So when teaching about the parable of the talents, a preacher can easily communicate to the audience that they best not waste the talents that God gave them, including both material possessions and personal abilities.

But just as there are "happy coincidences," in translation, there are also times when the differences between the languages causes some of what the text is saying to be missed, and that is the case with "shepherd." The noun "shepherd" (*poimēn*, #4166 ποιμήν) and the verb "shepherd" (*poimainō*, #4165 ποιμαίνω) are usually only translated that way by most English versions when the context clearly involves sheep or people metaphorically being referred to as "sheep." This is especially the case when it comes to the verb "shepherd," which is not translated that way by most English versions in the majority of places it appears, and instead it is translated by words such as "feed," "care for," "tend," "rule," "look after," and "herd" (cp. Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 9:7; 1 Pet. 5:2; Jude 1:12; Rev. 2:27; 7:17; 12:5; and 19:15). Also, sadly, it has happened in English that the office of someone who "shepherds" other people is not translated as "shepherd," but "pastor," even though the Greek word is the same. Thus English readers lose the wonderful connection between Jesus, the "Chief Shepherd," and the "shepherds" that he appointed to watch after his "sheep." Ephesians 4:11 says that when Jesus ascended "he gave some to be...pastors (shepherds)," so in that verse we see the Chief Shepherd appointing other shepherds to help him with the work.

Anyone who works with sheep knows that it is impossible to look after a large flock without help. A large flock always had a "chief shepherd" and other "shepherds" who helped with the work. That is exactly the case with the Body of Christ, which has millions of individual sheep. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd, and he works closely with the shepherds (the "pastors") he has placed in his Body. That Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd should be a great encouragement to anyone who is called to leadership in the

Body of Christ, because it is clear that any shepherd can and should look to the Chief Shepherd for help, guidance, support, information, and whatever else is needed to shepherd the flock.

1 Peter 5:2 should help us understand more completely what it means to have fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 John 1:3) and why we can have an intimate prayer relationship with Jesus Christ. When shepherding a literal flock of sheep, both the chief shepherd and the hired shepherds work hard to have a personal relationship with the sheep such that the sheep know and trust them. It is only the laziest of hirelings who do not get to know the sheep and properly care for them. The same is true with God's flock. Every godly earthly pastor (shepherd) works hard to have a personal and intimate relationship with the people he shepherds, and in fact would not be considered a good pastor if he was removed and distant from his flock. So too, Jesus, the "Chief Shepherd," works to have an intimate and personal relationship with his flock and is not distant from us. He promised, "I am with you always" (Matt. 28:20), and he is. We should not tackle life on our own without his guidance and help. No sheep would expect to tackle life without the shepherd's help. Let us regularly and diligently look to Jesus for help and guidance.

5:5. Quoted from Proverbs 3:34. See commentary on James 4:6.

5:8. "opponent at law." The Greek word is *antidikos* (#476 ἀντίδικος), and it has two meanings: to be constantly against as an enemy to; or to be an opponent in a court of law (thus, an "opponent at law"). The word *antidikos* occurs five times in the New Testament, and we translate it "opponent at law" here and Matthew 5:25 (cp. NASB in Matt. 5:25), we felt the other three times were clearly in a legal situation, and just translated it "opponent." Although the Devil is constantly against God's people, the context here in Peter favors the courtroom scenario (cp. BDAG Greek-English Lexicon). The Devil may be an enemy all the time, but he cannot devour everyone all the time. The Bible makes it clear that the Devil is constantly looking for people he can devour, often people who have sinned against God. These he accuses in God's court of justice.

Contrary to what many Christians believe, the Bible does not show "God in control" of what happens in life. Instead, the Bible portrays the earth as a war zone and God's army pitted against the Devil's army. That is why the Bible calls God a "warrior" (Ex. 15:3), and portrays God as being angry and hurrying to fight the enemy when His people are in danger and cry out to Him (Ps. 18:1-15).

Furthermore, the Devil cannot just kill anyone he wants, there are limits to his unrighteous acts. However, in God's court of justice he is accusing people before God day and night (Rev. 12:10), and sadly, often those accusations are deserved.

The teaching that "God is in control" has so filled Christendom that people do not see the clear teaching in Scripture that our sins sometimes cause God not to be able to protect us from the Devil. God is a just God, and the Adversary demand justice when it suits his plans. For example, Peter sinned, and the Devil "demanded" to harm him in some way. In Luke 22:31, Jesus told Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat." On what basis did Satan "demand" to have Peter? He demanded "justice" for Peter's sins. Jesus told Peter it was because he prayed for Peter that Peter was not handed over to Satan.

The legal nature of the struggle between God and the Devil is based upon God being a just God, and the Devil knowing that and using it to his advantage. In Exodus 24,

God and Israel made a covenant that we call the Old Covenant (miscalled, the “Old Testament). When Israel broke the covenant, God brought a lawsuit against Israel. Micah 6:2 (HCSB) says: “Listen to the LORD's lawsuit, you mountains and enduring foundations of the earth, because the LORD has a case against His people, and He will argue it against Israel.” In that verse, the Hebrew word *rib* (#7379), “lawsuit, legal case, dispute, or quarrel,” occurs twice. In Hosea 4:1 the Bible says Yahweh has a lawsuit against Israel. From what we see in Job chapter 1, Revelation 12, and other places, Satan would have been an aggressive prosecuting attorney against Israel. The people of Israel would not confess their sin and change, so God dissolved his marriage covenant, divorced Israel, and sent her away (Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8). Israel “lost” her case, and the Ten Tribes of Israel were conquered by Assyria, deported, and have never returned to their land, even to this day. The Bible shows that eventually the Devil will be the one judged in God's court, and he will be condemned (Dan. 7:10).

Christians have long known that, in general, if they obey God there are things go well for them that do not generally go well if they disobey God. This is not an absolute rule, because there is a spiritual war going on and evil does happen to good people. Nevertheless, it is such a well-established principle that many preachers say that when we sin, we “walk out from under the umbrella of God's protection.” The effect is certainly real, but the Bible does not use “umbrella” language. What actually happens? According to the biblical text, God has a courtroom in heaven, and the Devil is constantly in it, accusing the believers. If a believer is humble and obedient to God, the Devil has no basis for the accusation and it generally goes nowhere. However, if a believer sins willfully over and over, eventually justice demands that God cannot extend supernatural protection and the Devil is free to move against the person.

This occurs over and over in the Old Testament, although the Hebrew text does not give the Devil the credit for the evil. The language of the Old Testament hides the actions of the Devil and attributes them to God via the figure of speech, the idiom of permission [For more on the idiom of permission, see commentary on Romans 9:18]. Nevertheless, all one has to do is read the Old Testament in a cursory manner to see that when believers sinned, bad things happened to them.

What we must understand is that although we may sometimes have bad things happen to us that we do not deserve, if we ignore God and disobey His commands we will eventually have bad things happen to us. God's justice, which enables Him to extend protection to people who obey Him, requires Him to hand over to the Devil those people who defy Him. When we sin, we break God's heart because as our Father He loves us and wants the best for us all the time, but He cannot protect us if we insist on defying Him and doing evil.

“the Slanderer.” This is “the Devil.” The Greek is *diabolos* (#1228 διάβολος). The Greek word *diabolos* means “slanderer,” the one who slanders others, and that is a primary characteristic of the Devil. He has no regard for a person's reputation or the illicit means he uses to discredit and destroy people. Slander is a primary tactic of the Devil. [For information on the names of the Devil, see Appendix 14: “Names of the Slanderer”].

5:10. “restore.” *Katartizō* (#2675 καταρτίζω) can mean to “restore to a former condition” or “to prepare; to outfit” (BDAG). In this context it means to restore—“after

one has suffered for a little while,” God will put him into proper condition again, and then do more: confirm, strengthen, and establish him.