

# Word & Spirit Bible Study Notes on

## 1 Peter

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## Expository Notes on 1 Peter

### 1 Peter 1:1-2

<sup>1</sup>Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, <sup>2</sup>according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

#### The Author

Peter, like Paul in his letters, identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus. He could of course have identified himself in other ways, such as Peter the Galilean, or Peter the pastor of the church in Jerusalem, but his primary sense of identity came from the call that Jesus had put on his life.

#### The Recipients

Peter is eager to remind his readers that they too have the call of God on their life. They are described as *elect* and *chosen according to the Father's foreknowledge*, both terms emphasising God's sovereign work in their salvation. God had plans for their lives from before they were even born. This plan was put into action through the *sanctifying work of the Spirit*, by which Peter means that they have been set apart for God by the Holy Spirit who is making them holy.

#### Exiles

All this is important to them, because they are also *exiles*, or “strangers in the world”. These recipients had been scattered perhaps by persecution to distant places, and rather than feeling at home in their new location, they felt decidedly like outsiders. This experience is familiar to many Christians, who find themselves as a minority in a society that does not acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

#### Chosen for a Purpose

It is into this context that the reminder of God's sovereign plan for them comes as such an encouragement. God not only foreknew them, but the circumstances into which he would call them to live as witnesses. Peter goes on to remind them of two aspects of God's purpose. First, they are called to *obedience to Jesus Christ*. This is the essence of Christian life - we don't simply declare or acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, we demonstrate it as a living reality by our daily submission to him. Second, they were called to be *sprinkled with Jesus' blood*. Drawing on Old Testament sacrificial imagery, Peter speaks of the death of Jesus, and in particular how his sprinkled blood has cleansed us from our sin, and enabled us to live a life that is holy and pleasing to God.

#### Grace and Peace

Finally, in this opening section, Peter prays for an abundant measure of grace and peace. Though this prayer was a common one, it was far from being an empty formula. In the hard circumstances of life they found themselves in, Peter's readers needed all the grace and peace they could get. It is God's grace that gives us the resources to endure hardship and find joy in life, and his peace protects us from lives dominated by fear. Grace and peace then are two blessings from God that we should be eager to request from him, both for ourselves and for others.

## 1 Peter 1:3-5

<sup>3</sup>*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

### Spontaneous Praise

Peter has no qualms about breaking out into prayer or praise in the middle of writing a letter. Both came naturally to him, and the prayer he begins here is rich in truth about who God is and what he has done for us. The prayers in the Bible serve as excellent models for our own praying. Here Peter reminds us that we have the same God and Father as Jesus did, and indeed it is through knowing Jesus as our Lord and Saviour that we have come to relate to God as our Father.

### Living Hope

Peter lists some of the many blessings that God has given us. First, his *great mercy* towards us is a solemn reminder that we did not deserve anything but judgement. Our salvation was bought at a great price - only a God of great love and mercy would be willing to send his only Son to save us. Second, we have *new birth* - no matter what went before, we have a completely new start in a new life through the transforming power of God at work in us.

Third, we have a *living hope* - which is based upon the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. By this Peter means that our hope of resurrection to eternal life is based firmly upon the fact that we trust in the one who was himself raised from the dead. It is in the historical fact of the resurrection that we find our assurance that the promises of Jesus to us will indeed be fulfilled. Therefore we do not have a speculative hope but a certain hope - a living hope that energises us and causes us to live with confidence and faith, because the same God who raised Jesus from the dead is on our side.

### Indestructible Inheritance

Fourth, we have an *inheritance* that cannot be destroyed or diminished, waiting for us. Though we already experience many blessings, the full measure of all that we have received by coming into God's family is not yet in our possession. Many Christians in this life face hardships and persecution, but whatever people may take away from them, no one can take away what God has stored up for them in heaven to enjoy with him throughout eternity.

Finally, it is not just our inheritance that is safe, but we ourselves are *guarded by God's power*. As we put our faith in him, nothing can truly harm us. Our salvation, which in one sense is already ours, still awaits its final consummation when Jesus returns again to finally rid the world of sin and death, and we enter in to the inheritance promised to us.

So this prayer gives us reasons both to rejoice and to persevere. We rejoice at the many blessings God has poured out upon us, and we endure, confident that God will protect and sustain us, and certain that his promises to us of salvation and an eternal inheritance will one day be ours.

## 1 Peter 1:6-8

*<sup>6</sup>In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, <sup>7</sup>so that the tested genuineness of your faith--more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire--may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>8</sup>Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, <sup>9</sup>obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

### Joy and Grief

Peter has just reminded his readers of some of the wonderful blessings both present and future that God has bestowed upon us. This is naturally a cause of rejoicing, but he is also aware of the very real grief his readers may be suffering. These trials, though varied in kind and intensity, threaten to steal our joy. The response we are called to is not to deny the reality of our grief, but to keep rejoicing in the living hope that we have - an inheritance that cannot be taken from us, whatever people may do to us.

### Facing Trials

We are also called to understand the reasons for the trials we face. Though we would not seek them, and we would rather not have to face them, we must still embrace the truth that God uses them to accomplish his purposes. First of all, like gold being refined and proven in a furnace, so our faith is demonstrated to be genuine by our endurance through hardship. When approached with faith, trials strengthen our character as they force us to rely more and more upon the Spirit to sustain us and transform us. Second, we are encouraged with the reminder that we will receive a glorious commendation at the return of Jesus. What greater incentive could there be to persevere, than to know that one day we will meet the one who persevered to the end, enduring the cross to purchase our salvation.

### Love and Belief

Peter is aware of the miracle of faith that God has performed in the lives of these believers. Unlike Peter, they had not seen the risen Lord Jesus with their physical eyes, yet they both love him and believe in him. Perhaps he has in mind the words of Jesus to Thomas: "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Their faith therefore is the result not of what they have seen with their eyes, but the working of the Holy Spirit within them.

### Inexpressible Joy

It is this work of the Holy Spirit that Peter is surely referring to when he speaks of the joy that fills the believers even in the midst of trials. He describes it as inexpressible and full of glory. This is not superficial happiness; this is a deep joy that we cannot be robbed of even in the most difficult of circumstances. The joy is prompted by the realisation that our faith is not unrewarded. Our inheritance - the salvation that will be ours fully in the future, is already coming into our possession in the present.

## 1 Peter 1:10-12

*<sup>10</sup>Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, <sup>11</sup>inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. <sup>12</sup>It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.*

### Salvation and Grace

While on the subject of salvation, Peter makes a very interesting digression at this point. He refers to the Old Testament prophets who wrote concerning the gospel. They didn't fully understand the things they were writing about - in particular how they were going to be fulfilled, but they sought intently and eagerly to know the time and circumstances. What they did know was that God was sending a Messiah, the Christ, who would bring *salvation* and *grace*.

### Sufferings and Glories

More than that, the prophets foresaw that the Christ would have to *suffer*. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Isaiah 53, but throughout the Old Testament we see many examples of the cross of Christ foreshadowed. But at the same time they saw the *glories* that would follow that suffering. Of course, not all of those prophecies have yet been fulfilled in their completeness, but the path of suffering to glory is one that Jesus took, and his followers too must expect to follow.

### Prophets and Preachers

These Old Testament prophets didn't have all the details they wanted, but they knew that what they were writing under the inspiration of the Spirit was going to be for the benefit of future generations of believers. This gives us an insight into the nature of predictive prophecy in the Bible. It is not intended to enable us to fully know all the details in advance of the end, but for us to be prayerfully expectant beforehand, and for us to be able to recognize what is going on when the fulfilment does come. This is also true of those prophetic passages concerning the second coming. We may not have all the details we want now, but we are to be ready and expectant, and informed enough to recognise the signs of the times when they occur. Peter informs us here that there are some things that even the angels would love to know more about, probably referring to the mystery of the gospel.

The work of the Old Testament prophets has now been continued by modern day evangelists, who by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the prophets, are now preaching the gospel around the world. It was through those preachers that Peter's original hearers were saved, and the gospel message continues to spread through the means of Spirit-empowered proclaimers of the gospel.

## 1 Peter 1:13-16

*<sup>13</sup>Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup>since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

### Prepared for Action

Now that Peter has reminded his readers of the great inheritance they have, which gives them hope in the face of trials, he now calls them to a life of holiness. The first aspect of this is to have a *prepared mind*. The metaphor of being *sober* emphasises that the believers need to be clear thinkers. They cannot just muddle through life in a mental fog. The language is reminiscent of Rom 12:2 – “be transformed by the renewing of your mind”. We need our thinking to be directed by the Word of God, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit if we are to make the wise decisions necessary to lead a holy life.

Again, we are called here to set our hope on the future grace that will be ours at Jesus’ return. Here it is called his “revelation”. Jesus is truly alive and risen at the moment, but for the present time we do not see him. When he is finally revealed to us, all the promises he has made to us will have their consummation - we will receive our inheritance.

### Be Holy

The reason we need prepared minds is that we are called to a life of obedience. We not simply are *children* of God; we are called to be *obedient* children. This necessarily entails us knowing what God’s will and requirements are. There is a warning here for converts not to go back to living as they did before they were saved, when they lived in ignorance of the truth of the gospel. The temptation to go back to that way of life could be quite strong, particularly if they were being persecuted for their faith, or feeling excluded or marginalised from society as a whole. Their old way of life is described here as conforming to “passions” or “evil desires”; the Christian has to learn to say no to the desires he finds within himself that run contrary to the will of God.

The fact that God himself is holy, gives his people the mandate to holiness in their own lives. Here Peter has in mind particularly the ethical and moral behaviour of Christians; we are called to be holy in all we *do*. Holiness is not simply a pious state of mind, it is worked out practically in both what we do, and what we refrain from doing. Peter quotes from Leviticus (Lev 11:44,45; 19:2) to reinforce the point - we are called to be holy because God is holy. Peter was well aware that some of the Levitical food laws had been abrogated in the new covenant, following his vision in Acts 10, but he sees in these verses a timeless principle: God is unchangingly holy, and in all ages his people must also be holy.

## 1 Peter 1:17-21

*<sup>17</sup>And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup>He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for your sake, <sup>21</sup>who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

### Father and Judge

In this section Peter reminds us that although we now relate to God as Father, he is still also the Judge of all the earth. He points out two characteristics of God's judgement. First, he judges *impartially* - God is in full possession of all the facts and in full control of his emotions - there are no miscarriages of justice in his court. Second, he judges *according to deeds*. We know that unbelievers will be condemned before God the Judge on the basis of their sinful actions, but what about Christians? Have we not been saved by grace? How could we stand if we were judged according to works? The answer is that though our salvation is truly and completely by grace, this does not exempt us from giving an account of ourselves to God (Rom 14:12). Our desire on that day is not that we merely be saved, but that we receive a commendation from the Lord for our obedience and faithfulness to him.

### Reverent Fear

It is for this reason that we should have a *reverent fear* towards God. This is not terror of a God who will crush us mercilessly, but the right and proper respect that a child has for their parents - wanting to please them, and not wanting to provoke them to anger. The Old Testament teaches us in many places that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (e.g. Ps 111:10, Job 28:28, Prov 9:10, Micah 6:9). Thus a right reverence and respect for God will motivate us to lead lives that are holy.

### Redeemed by Blood

We are then given a second reason to live holy lives - the great price paid for us. God did not merely have to pay money to save us; it cost him the most precious thing imaginable - the blood of his own Son - Jesus. If then God was willing to give up so much to rescue us from the empty way of life we used to live in, how then could we go back to it? Would that not be the most disrespectful and ungrateful response imaginable to his great love?

### The Chosen Lamb

Peter again alludes to the Old Testament sacrificial system - Jesus is like the lamb without blemish or defect which was sacrificed to provide forgiveness for the sinner. Here we see yet again an example of the fact that the death of Jesus was in the plan of God from before the incarnation. Peter says that Jesus' death was foreknown from even before the world's creation.

It is this Jesus who not only died, but was raised from the dead and glorified, who is the basis for our belief, faith and hope in God. We can trust that God the judge will be merciful to us, because of Jesus. God's raising him from the dead was a vindication of all the promises of eternal life he made

to those who would believe in him. If he was still dead, then how could we have assurance that Jesus could somehow procure our pardon on the final judgement? But he has risen, and so we have confidence that we can approach God and find acceptance.

## 1 Peter 1:22-25

<sup>22</sup>Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, <sup>23</sup>since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; <sup>24</sup>for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

### Love One Another

Having called us to be holy, Peter reminds us that we have been *purified* by our obedience to the truth of the gospel. If this is the case, then it should be outworked in a love for one another. This love is described in a number of ways. It is *sincere* love - as Christians we are not to fall into the trap of merely saying nice things but not actually caring about one another. It is *brotherly* love - no matter how different our cultural or social backgrounds are, we are all now part of the same family, and should have a deep commitment to one another as a result. It is *deep* or *earnest* love, which speaks of a depth of feeling that will result in us taking sacrificial practical steps to demonstrate our love. Finally, it is *from the heart*, which sums up all that has been said before - this is not shallow or superficial love, but real love like that demonstrated by Jesus.

### Imperishable Seed

This family bond we have with other believers is not a temporary thing. We are not just called to get along with each other for the time being. No, Peter here says that we have been born again with “imperishable seed”. What God has begun in us will go on into eternity. He quotes the familiar words of Isaiah 40:6-8 that remind us of our human mortality; we live only a short time, but God’s word is eternal. But if we have been born again through the word of God, then our new life, like God’s word, is also eternal. The word of God here is described as living - it refers not simply to a book, or even to a message contained within a book, but to the fact that when God speaks, his words are true and have power to bring into being whatever he commands.

## 1 Peter 2:1-3

*<sup>1</sup>So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. <sup>2</sup>Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation-- <sup>3</sup>if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

### Hindrances to Love

We have just been commanded to love one another deeply, from the heart. This section gives us some very down-to-earth advice on how to make that a reality. We are to get rid of malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. These terms cover both our *attitudes* and our *words*. Simply controlling our tongue is not enough - we need a right attitude to one another - not hating or envying each other. We need to be straight-forward with one another - being truthful people and not two-faced is the only way to allow deep relationships to grow. And we are warned against *all kinds* of slander - which is to say that there are many subtle ways we can damage another's reputation by our words, and none of them are appropriate. Every honest Christian will admit that they have not fully rid themselves of all of these things. We cannot make peace with them, but strive with God's help to eliminate these attitudes and actions that will get in the way of true love.

### Grow Up

We are then called to be like newborn babies, who are single-minded about wanting their milk. Nothing else will satisfy them. Likewise, we are to *crave* spiritual milk. What could Peter mean by spiritual milk? It is hard to say for certain, but there is a clue in what it will do for us - it will cause us to grow up in our salvation. There are lots of practical steps towards Christian maturity, these include learning to study and meditate on the Word, to spend time in prayer, to enjoy fellowship, and to cultivate godly character. Just as newborn babies need milk to grow, we also need to have a healthy diet of all these things which will progress us to maturity.

Ultimately, the path to maturity is to know God more deeply and intimately. Peter quotes from Psalm 34:8, saying that they have tasted that the Lord is good. So if we have indeed tasted and seen that God is good, then surely our appetite and hunger for him must also increase. Our desire to learn his ways and to become like him will grow. We will become more serious about avoiding those things that bring him displeasure. In short, our lives will be transformed to be more like Jesus, as we seek after the Lord and experience more of him. All attempts at leading more righteous lives that are not rooted in knowing God more, are doomed to failure either through discouragement, or through settling for a superficial religiosity.

## 1 Peter 2:4-5

*<sup>4</sup>As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, <sup>5</sup>you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

### The Living Stone

Jesus has already been described as a sacrificial lamb in this book, but here we have a very different picture. Jesus is called a *living stone*. Peter seems to have Psalm 118:22 in mind – “the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone”. It is a verse that Jesus himself quoted in the parable of the tenants (see Matt 22:42), and that Peter himself quoted to the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:11, referring directly to Jesus. The picture is of builders looking for suitable stones to use as bricks in a grand building - presumably a temple of worship. They find one that doesn’t seem like it will fit so they throw it away, only to discover later that it turns out to be the most crucial stone in the entire building (or perhaps in a completely different building). As a human race, we rejected Jesus, and crucified him, as though we had no need of him. But in God’s estimation he was the centre of everything.

### Living Stones

But now Peter moves from Jesus to us. We too are “living stones”. Of course we are not the “capstone”, but nonetheless, we see here that God is building something, and he is using us to build it. God is using us to build a new temple, in which his presence will dwell. He is calling us to form a new and holy priesthood, who will offer up a new type of sacrifice. But God is not simply remaking the old temple worship, priesthood and sacrificial system of the Old Covenant. No, what he is doing now is the reality to which the old system pointed.

### New Temple

The new temple is a *spiritual* house, made not of bricks and mortar but of people. God’s dwelling is not constrained to a physical location, but is in and amongst his people - the church. It is a wonderful truth that God indwells each believer individually, but we must not forget the many promises that God will be present in a special way amongst his corporate people as they gather together. This is the reality that Jesus prophesied to the Samaritan woman in John 4:21-23 that a time would come where worship would be no longer based in Jerusalem, but would be in spirit and in truth.

### New Priesthood

The new priesthood also is different - it is not just certain consecrated individuals, but all of God’s people are now to be priests, *holy* (that is, consecrated) to the Lord. Access to the most holy place that was restricted to just a few is now wide open to all. We need no further mediators between us and God because Jesus has opened the way.

### New Sacrifices

The new sacrifices are different too. No longer is the blood of animals offered up, since Jesus laid down the final sacrifice for sin once for all. Now the sacrifices we offer are ourselves, laying down our lives in service to the King. Under the Old Covenant, sacrifices were only acceptable if they were

without blemish. So how could we offer up our lives as sacrifices to God and be accepted? The answer is in verse 5 - we are acceptable to God *through* Jesus Christ.

**Chosen by God**

So we are to think of ourselves as *stones, priests* and *sacrifices*. Just as Jesus was *the* stone, *the* priest and *the* sacrifice. What a privilege to identify with Jesus in these ways. For Peter's readers, they too knew what it was like to be "rejected by men", but they could find great comfort in the fact that were also are chosen by God and precious to him.

## 1 Peter 2:6-8

*“For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.’<sup>6</sup> So the honour is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,’<sup>7</sup> and ‘A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.’ They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.”*

### The Scripture Says

We have already noticed that Peter is alluding to Psalm 118:22 (“the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone”) in the preceding verses, but here he gives us some fuller quotes of the Scriptures that are on his mind. Why does he do this? I think there are at least two reasons.

First is that Peter believed in the *authority of Scripture*. He wanted to show his readers that he was basing what he was teaching on Scripture. The Old Testament did not cease to be the Word of God with the coming of Jesus. Christianity is not a new religion unconnected to Judaism, but is its fulfilment and goal. Peter’s practice of backing up his points with Scriptures, both when he was writing and preaching, is one that we need to take care to emulate. We do not teach based on our own good ideas, or persuade people with the quality of our rhetorical skills, but we seek to let the Word of God speak through us, deriving our authority from the fact that we are speaking the truth of the Word of God.

Second, Peter believed in the principle of *Christ in all the Scriptures*. He believed that Jesus’ life and sacrificial death were to be found throughout the Scriptures. He had clearly been meditating much on these passages in Psalms and Isaiah (in these verses he quotes Isa 28:16, Ps 118:22 and Isa 8:14), and had come to understand how they related to Jesus. Of course, we need to be careful not to make wildly speculative and unwarranted connections, but the principle of looking for the New Covenant in the Old is one that will help enormously in the difficult job of understanding and applying the Old Testament. Jesus himself gave us reason to do this when on the road to Emmaus, he demonstrated that the entire Old Testament spoke about him: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27)

### Destined to Disobey

Verse 8 says something that will grate with many readers. We rejoice in the truth that Jesus was chosen by God from before the foundation of the world to be our Saviour. And we are amazed that we too are people who God has chosen and foreknown. But what can be said of these people who “stumble” over Jesus, disobeying the word? Peter says that they were destined to do so. Does God predetermine even our sin? We can certainly say that this verse strongly argues for God’s sovereignty over all things. Even the rejection of Jesus was something he foreknew and planned for. Does it deny their personal responsibility or choice? Again, though we may not understand the whole mystery here, there is no get-out for human responsibility.

These people “disobeyed the word” - an action of the will, and the judgement of God has fallen on them as a result. It is interesting that Peter should describe rejecting Jesus as “disobeying the word”. But in Acts 6:7, people who are saved are described as being “obedient to the faith”. The

gospel is not just a message, it is a command. To reject it is to disobey God and remain in a lifestyle of disobedience to God, and to accept it is to sign up for a lifetime of obedience to God.

## 1 Peter 2:9-10

*<sup>9</sup>But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. <sup>10</sup>Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

### A Chosen People

If you were to ask an observant Jew in Peter's day who the "chosen people" were, or who the "holy nation" was, or which people were "God's own possession", you would get an immediate reply: "the people of Israel". These were the terms used throughout the Old Testament to describe the Jewish people. And yet here Peter applies the very same terms to the church! We are a *chosen people* - elected by God's foreknowledge to create a new people out of all the peoples of the earth. We are also a *royal priesthood* - in the new covenant, every believer is a member of the royal family and is a priest. We are also a *holy nation* - set apart and consecrated to God. And as a people we are *God's special possession*. We belong to him. All these terms point to the church as the new Israel. We are truly a new nation, constituted of people from every nation.

### Called For Praise

There is a purpose behind what God is doing in creating a new nation. We are intended to proclaim God's "excellencies". As God's people we are to be those who both declare his glory with our lips and demonstrate it in our lives. We proclaim his greatness as we gather in praise and we proclaim his gospel as we go out into the world. It is true to say that our chief goal and purpose in life is to glorify God. Everything else we do for him flows from that basic principle.

### Before and After

One of the great motivations to praise is to look back and acknowledge the wonders of what God has done both individually in our lives, and for the church as a result of the death and resurrection of Jesus. We used to be in *darkness*, which speaks both of our lostness - we couldn't see where we were going, and also our moral failings - our sin was not exposed. But now we are living in the *light* - our eyes have been opened up to the truth, and we live righteous lives without shame. We were once *not a people*, not being part of God's special chosen people, but now we have been graciously called to belong and be a part of the wonderful new thing God is doing. Once we had *not received mercy*, and we didn't deserve to either. Justice was coming our way, but instead of receiving a deserved punishment for sin, we have *received mercy*. Each of these glorious truths will stir us to respond in wonder and praise if we will meditate upon them. They will give us a real sense of identity and belonging even as we live in a world where we may feel rejected.

## 1 Peter 2:11-12

<sup>11</sup>*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup>Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

### Sojourners and Exiles

Peter again refers to his readers as *sojourners* and *exiles*. Both terms imply living in a foreign land, with the intention or desire to return home. What was true literally for many of the original recipients of this letter, is also true in a very real sense for all Christians, particularly those living as a minority in a society hostile to their faith. Though as Christians we desire to integrate well with our community, there will always be a tension as all Christians are in one sense foreigners wherever we live - we are part of the new nation that God has created. So the terms sojourners and exiles remind us that our true belonging is not to a human nation but to God himself.

### Abstain from Sinful Desires

With this in mind, we are called to *abstain from sinful desires*, or more literally, from the “passions of the flesh”. When living among people who have much lower moral and ethical standards than us, and who view our beliefs and practices as weird if not downright dangerous, the pressure to fit in can be intense. Our “flesh” already wants to do many of the things that the unbelievers around us are doing. So we need to be determined to resist temptation, and to live according to God’s standard of holiness, not the world’s idea of right and wrong.

But some Christians may be secretly wondering if it really is worth the effort to discipline ourselves and to resist joining in with the sin around us. Peter answers this with a warning - though these desires may be natural to our human nature, they nevertheless are *waging war* against our soul. Giving in to them will result in spiritual defeat for us, and will have disastrous consequences if allowed to go unchecked. Temptations to lie, gossip, speak unkind words, think lustful thoughts, behave selfishly may not feel at the time as though they are going to cause us lasting damage, but we need to know that if we will not fight against them, then they will progressively kill off our love for the Lord, by grieving the Holy Spirit and pushing him out of our lives, and will result in us becoming ensnared in bondage to patterns of sinful behaviour.

### Display Righteous Lives

In contrast to giving in to indulge the desires of our flesh, we are called to behave honourably amongst the non-Christian society in which we live. The desire is those around us will see our good works and glorify God, as Jesus spoke about in Matt 5:16. And yet Peter is realistic to know that it doesn’t always work out that way in the short term. Even the most godly Christians are sometimes accused of being evildoers, and thus it may not be until the final day of judgement that all will acknowledge that the believers were indeed doing what was right in the eyes of God. The reference to the day of God’s visitation - the second coming of Jesus - also serves as an reminder to Christians that it is God whose approval we should be seeking first, not that of an unbelieving world.

## 1 Peter 2:13-15

<sup>13</sup>*Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup>or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup>For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.*

### Submit to Human Authority

In the book of Acts, Peter is arrested for causing a public disturbance with his preaching. When he is commanded the next day to stop preaching, he refuses, saying that he must obey God rather than men (Acts 4:19). But if we think that Peter made a habit of defying authorities wherever he could, this verse shows that his attitude was very different. Here he commands us to submit to *every* human authority. This is astonishing. The Roman emperor and governors were not always just and benevolent in the way they ruled.

So how could Peter issue a blanket statement like this, when he knows that there are corrupt rulers in the world? He gives three reasons why we should obey. First, we obey *for the Lord's sake*. By submitting to human authority, we are honouring God, who is the ultimate source of that authority.

Second, *God has put them in place for a purpose*. Our governments and rulers are there to punish wrongdoing and promote right behaviour. Sadly, no human authority has ever done this perfectly, but we should not despise what they are doing, and should recognise that God has ordained that society be ordered in this way. As Christians then, we are to support our government by submitting to the laws they impose, and by encouraging them to fulfil their divine mandate more closely. This is not to say that there will never be times where our obedience to God brings us into conflict with the laws of our land, but we should not feel free to excuse ourselves of adhering to laws and taxes simply because we do not like them.

### Silence by Doing Good

Finally, our submission to human authority, serves as a powerful *witness* to the transforming power of the gospel. The laws of the land typically enforce standards of goodness that are agreed upon by all. If Christians are scrupulous in keeping them, then those who seek to slander us will not be able to find a basis for their accusations. Notice that Peter expects us to silence foolish talk, not by retorting and contradicting our accusers, but *by our behaviour*. Christians therefore should be noted for being law abiding citizens, and we should also prayerfully consider how we may get involved in supporting our government in their role of punishing what is wrong and promoting what is good. More than that, we should desire that our churches have a reputation for doing good in the communities in which we live.

## 1 Peter 2:16-20

*<sup>16</sup>Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup>Honour everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor. <sup>18</sup>Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup>For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.*

### God's Slaves

Peter has just been encouraging his readers to be submissive to human authority. They need to have the right mindset if they are to do this. They need to know that they are both *free* and *slaves* at the same time. Their freedom is from the slavery to sin and the emptiness of life before they were saved. Now they have new life in Jesus. But their freedom does not mean they no longer have responsibilities - there is a change of master. Christians are to understand themselves as slaves to God - we live to do his will. Fortunately God is not a harsh master, and serving him brings us blessing and fulfilment in life.

### Respect Everyone

At the heart of ethical living is to show right respect to everyone. Peter gives three relationships as examples. Towards our *fellow believers*, we are to show love, remembering that despite any human differences we may have, God has brought us together and made us part of his new people.

Towards *God*, Peter reiterates his command (1 Pet 1:16) to show reverent fear, remembering that he is the judge of all people. And towards the highest ruler of their time, *the emperor*, they were to show appropriate honour. We may be critical sometimes of the rulers of our country, but Christians should not be those who treat them with contempt or mocking.

### Suffering as Slaves

Peter now moves on to deal with the stark reality of daily life for many of his readers - they were slaves. Though Christians at different times in history have been used by God to oppose and even abolish different forms of slavery, those who were living as slaves still needed to know how to approach their daily lives. He is being pastoral at this point, rather than political and ideological.

Peter is uncompromising - they must respect those who are their "masters", even those who are harsh and unfair. Some of them may even have been beaten by their masters for misdemeanours or failures. Though they are suffering terrible injustice, if they remain respectful and don't retaliate, then God will honour them for their restraint. Of course, sometimes they may have done wrong - so not all suffering endured in this way is especially honouring to God. But when they have done what is right, and yet receive unjust punishment for it, then God sees and takes notice of this noble attitude.

For those of us living in societies free from slavery, we may feel unable to relate to this teaching, and even shocked by it. And yet from time to time, we will suffer unjustly at the hands perhaps of heavy-handed employers. Our response is not to be one of seeking revenge or harm for them, but to treat those who mistreat us with respect and dignity, even though we may respectfully wish to put

across our point of view. Doing this will require the Holy Spirit's power working within us, for responding positively in the face of injustice does not come naturally to anyone.

## 1 Peter 2:21-25

*<sup>21</sup>For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

### Called to Suffer

Peter is still finishing off his instructions to slaves here, yet the principle he gives them for enduring suffering is one that applies to all Christians. The logic of his argument doesn't make for pleasant reading, as most of us like to avoid suffering wherever possible. But here we are told that we are *called to suffer*, because we are called *to follow Christ's example*. If Jesus walked the way of the cross, and we are to walk in his footsteps, then we too are to walk the way of the cross, which is the path of suffering. Jesus said as much when he declared that anyone who would follow him must take up their cross (Matt 16:24). It is not that we are actively looking for trouble, but rather that a life of committed following after Jesus will inevitably cause us to encounter suffering.

### Jesus' Attitude to Suffering

It is not enough to merely accept that suffering will come our way, it is imperative that we determine to approach it in the way that Jesus did. Suffering in and of itself does not benefit us, but when we take on the attitude of Jesus within our suffering, then good will result of it. Peter highlights a number of aspects of the suffering Jesus experienced, seen most clearly at the cross. First of all, we notice that Jesus was *innocent* throughout his suffering. He had done nothing to deserve it, in word or deed. So if we feel that we cannot make sense of the suffering or persecution we face, or that it is a terrible injustice, we should remember that Jesus knows our situation, and we can look to him for the resources and the example of how to respond in the right way.

Second, we notice that *Jesus did not respond with hatred or threats*. Not only was his suffering not caused by any sin he had committed, but he did not allow his suffering to become the cause of sin. It can be so easy to return hateful comments to those who speak maliciously about us. Some of us are tempted to do this to the face of our enemies; others do it behind their backs. But Jesus simply received their hatred and responded with a prayer for their forgiveness. He didn't even threaten them - he had no plans to "get even", because he knew that God is the ultimate judge. Faith in God allows us to have peace about the personal injustice we suffer because we know he *judges justly*.

### The Purpose of the Cross

Having thought about Jesus' amazing attitude towards the cruelty and injustice of the cross, we now reflect on the purpose of it. Why was Jesus willing to accept such pain? It was because of us. We were *straying like sheep*, wandering foolishly away from safety, heading to our own deaths. Jesus himself is the good Shepherd, and yet we had turned our backs on him, living outside of his loving protective care.

However, the good Shepherd didn't just leave us, but came to save us, laying down his life for the sheep, which means that we are now empowered to *die to sin* and *live to righteousness*. In other

words, the purpose of the cross was not simply forgiveness of our sin, but moral transformation of our characters. In a glorious mystery, Jesus himself *bore our sin* in his own body as he died on the cross, dying in our place, and receiving in his own body the penalty of sin - death. Having set us free from the penalty of sin, he now enables us to break the power of sin because of the new life we have.

Peter again quotes from Isaiah 53, "by his wounds you have been healed", as he describes the cross. Though Matthew applies this passage to physical healing, here Peter seems to be thinking of our sin as the great sickness that we have been healed from. Worse than any bodily disease, sin kills not just our bodies but our souls. Now that we have been healed from our sin problem, we are free to be morally healthy, and to live even in this present world the righteous lives for which we were created. So the cross is good news for our whole person (body and soul) and our whole lives (present and future).

## 1 Peter 3:1-7

<sup>1</sup>Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives-- <sup>2</sup>when they see your respectful and pure conduct. <sup>3</sup>Do not let your adorning be external--the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold, or the putting on of clothing-- <sup>4</sup>but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. <sup>5</sup>For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their husbands, <sup>6</sup>as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. <sup>7</sup>Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

### Wives' Witness

Having addressed slaves, who were the lowest social grouping of the time, Peter now turns to wives, who were expected in their culture to be subject to their husbands. In particular he has in mind wives of unbelieving husbands. These husbands may be suffering some degree of loss of face, because their own wives were not worshipping the household gods. These wives are encouraged to demonstrate more, not less, respect for their husbands than they did previously. Rather than engaging in heated debates, they are to witness by their pure and respectful attitudes.

Of course, wives of Christian husbands too are encouraged in other places in the New Testament to have a respectful and submissive attitude towards their husband (for example, Col 3:18). But the wives of unbelieving husbands in particular may have to patiently endure the anger and resentment their husband feels regarding their conversion. In this, they too are to look to Christ as their model of enduring unjust suffering.

### Wives' Beauty

Though our modern society has changed in many ways, there is still a strong tendency for a woman to measure her worth in terms of her outward appearance. She knows that if she looks beautiful, she may get treated better by her husband, or be able to gain favour and influence in other situations. Many women experience profound feelings of depression and hopelessness because they do not consider themselves to have attained the physical shape or appearance deemed beautiful by society.

By way of contrast, Christian women are urged to consider what God considers beautiful in a person. In particular, a *gentle and quiet spirit* is of great worth in his sight. Peter is not saying that gentleness and quietness are especially feminine characteristics. Jesus is still in mind as the model, and he demonstrated gentleness and quietness as he faced the unjust suffering of the cross.

With this in mind, Peter calls on the women to avoid becoming preoccupied with fashion, jewellery or hairstyles in the way that many of their contemporaries were. Rather they are to cultivate godly character in themselves. This will find them favour with God, and actually may result in their unbelieving husbands becoming open to receiving the gospel themselves.

### **Wives' Role Models**

Though Jesus is of course the example that all Christians, male and female, seek to follow, it is also helpful to allow ourselves to be inspired by the godly example of other believers who have gone before us. Peter here suggests Sarah as a good example of a godly woman. We know she was a woman of great physical beauty (see Gen 12:11), but she also had that beauty of character Peter has been talking about.

She submitted to Abraham's leadership as he had been called by God to take the family and travel to a new place. Her deep respect for her husband is evidenced by the respectful way she addressed him - calling him "lord". This is of course not a command for wives to call their husbands 'lord', but simply an example of her submissive attitude. Interestingly, Peter notes that to be like Sarah involves not being afraid. The wife's submission therefore is not due to fear of incurring her husband's wrath if she doesn't, but due to her desire to be like Jesus in all her relationships. Courage therefore should not be thought of as a masculine virtue, but Christian women should aspire to the fearlessness of heroes such as Sarah. More modern examples of courageous women of faith might include Corrie Ten Boom, Jackie Pullinger, Joni Eareckson, or Heidi Baker.

### **Husbands' Responsibilities**

Finally, Peter gives some brief instructions to husbands. Though converting to Christianity was not so difficult for men, they needed to be reminded of how they should rightly exercise the headship of the household they oversaw. The guiding principle for their actions is the same as for slaves and wives - follow the example of Jesus, and treat others with respect.

Husbands are specifically instructed to *be understanding*. Christian husbands should be thoughtful about how they interact with their wives, careful not to accidentally or needlessly cause offense or misunderstanding. They are called also to show *honour*, and recognise that in some senses their wife may be "weaker", probably referring to physical strength, or perhaps to the idea that many women have a more sensitive disposition than men. The husband therefore should be careful not to expect more than is reasonable from his wife, and should not thoughtlessly hurt her with insensitive comments.

Though some modern readers may see this passage as sexist, in fact Peter is using it to radically challenge the inequalities of his day. The husbands here are told that their wives are "*heirs*" with them of the gift of new life. Though inheritance may have been for men only in that culture, the gospel was available to male and female on an equal basis. Peter then warns men that if they do not treat their wives in a manner that honours and understands them, then their prayers will be hindered, for they will incur the displeasure of God.

## 1 Peter 3:8-12

<sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup>Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. <sup>10</sup>For “Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; <sup>11</sup>let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. <sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

### Right Attitudes

We have just come to an end of some instructions targeted at specific groups - slaves, wives and husbands. Each group was to operate on the same principle - respect for others, and emulation of the example of Jesus. Now Peter turns to address the entire church, for these principles apply to every Christian.

First, we are to be *like-minded* - in other words, we should strive to make the church a place of joyful unity, rather than characterised by factions and divisions. There will always be differences of opinion, but to the extent that we are striving to be like Jesus, we will find a tremendous unity of purpose. Submission becomes a joy not a burden when those you submit to are like-minded with you.

Second, we are to be *sympathetic*. This means being mindful of one another's weaknesses and struggles. We should not be quick to condemn each other, but recognise the difficult circumstances in which they are seeking to live out their Christian witness.

Third, we are to *love one another* with a brotherly love. Again we are reminded that because of Jesus we are part of a new family. Just as a human family has a strong commitment to provide for and care for one another, come what may, so the Christian church should have a similar depth of commitment to look after one another and show love in practical ways.

Fourth, we are to be *compassionate*, or “tender-hearted”. This is the opposite of indifference. It is easy to turn a blind eye to the suffering of others, or to feign concern without really caring. But those who follow the example of Jesus must learn to be moved by the suffering of others, and seek to alleviate it wherever we can, and support them through it in the circumstances in which we have no influence.

Finally, we are to be *humble*. This means not to think too highly of ourselves, but recognize that we are who we are because of the undeserved grace of God. A humble person is also teachable and does not insist on their own agenda or way. Note that humility was not only appropriate for those in low social positions, such as slaves and wives, but for all believers, even (and in fact especially) those in positions of leadership or responsibility.

### Right Speaking

If we cultivate these right attitudes, one of the first things to change will be the way we use our tongues. We will avoid all kinds of speech that are ungodly. Especially important is not returning insults or slander on those who verbally abuse us or speak maliciously against us. This is extremely

hard to do, when we hear people speaking all kinds of unfair and untrue things against Christians, but in these circumstances we are to be mindful of the example of Christ, and not respond in kind. In fact, beyond simply not retaliating verbally, we are called to bring blessing to those who set themselves up as our enemies, by speaking kindly and courteously to them, and even by practically serving them where we have the opportunity.

Again Peter draws from the Old Testament to back up what he is saying. Quoting Psalm 34, he reminds us that God has promised his blessing upon those who will use their tongues righteously, and honour God with their conduct. Those who live in such a way will find that God's favour is on them and he will hear their prayers. But just as the harsh husband's prayers are hindered because of his lack of understanding for his wife, so all who harm others with their tongue will find that God himself is opposing them. The Psalm also speaks of seeking and pursuing peace - a powerful way of saying that with our tongues we have the power to bring peace into hostile situations by speaking in love, or we can inflame them further by words spoken out of hatred.

## 1 Peter 3:13-17

*<sup>13</sup>Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup>yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.*

### Ready to Suffer

One would think that living a life characterised by love and blessing others would result in Christians having no enemies. And as a general principle, this is true. Those people who are patently trying to live for the good of others will often earn the respect of the unbelieving society around them. But Peter is not so naive as to think that this is always the case. Sometimes, despite the exemplary behaviour of Christians, there will be suffering for doing what is right. This is not necessarily physical violence, but often slanderous misrepresentation or threatening behaviour. The Christian is urged not to give in to fear, but to take comfort from the knowledge that God will bless them for their resolve to honour him. It is easy to be intimidated by those openly opposed to the gospel, but we should have confidence that God is for us as we seek to witness to the truth.

### Ready to Answer

Much has been made by Peter of the example of Jesus' non-retaliation in the face of suffering, but this should not be understood to mean that there is never a place for a Christian to speak up. In fact, here we are specifically called to *be prepared* to give an answer. This is more than just having a good apologetic ready, but also preparing to give it in a *courteous and respectful* manner. No matter how hostile our accusers are, we are not given a mandate to return their hatred, but rather to be so gentle and respectful that they will feel begin to feel ashamed of the way they have misrepresented us. The ability to answer in this way is dependent on us setting apart Christ as Lord in our hearts. When we have settled in our inmost being that we will follow his example in everything, then we are ready to respond to those who speak against us.

It is vital that Christians remember that the goal is not to win arguments or to silence critics, but to win people over to following Jesus themselves. We ourselves are the representatives of Christ on earth. If what unbelievers see in us is not attractive, what will cause them to want to know our Lord for themselves? Those who perhaps have built up a long-standing prejudice against the Christian faith will only see that broken down if they get to know people who radically contradict those stereotypes with a shining witness of virtuous living.

Peter closes this section with a statement that sounds obvious at first - it is better to suffer for doing good rather than evil. What he is saying is that suffering may sometimes be in the will of God for us, just as it was for Jesus. But Christians should be careful not to interpret all unbelieving antagonism as some kind of validation that we are doing something right. Sometimes Christians behave in distinctly un-Christlike ways, and where that is the case, any criticism we receive for it is not to our credit but to our shame.

## 1 Peter 3:18-22

*<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. <sup>21</sup>Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.*

### **Put to Death, Made Alive**

We come now to one of the most difficult to understand passages in the whole New Testament. Peter has been arguing that we should continue to do what is right, even in if that means we must endure opposition and suffering. Now he draws on the example of Jesus and the story of Noah to make his point. First, he speaks of the *once-for-all* nature of Jesus' sacrificial suffering and death. He died as the righteous one in the place of the unrighteous, so we could be brought to God, where previously our sin had separated us from him. Jesus was then raised from the dead by the Spirit into everlasting life, blazing a trail in which we will follow.

### **Proclamation to Imprisoned Spirits**

So who were these "imprisoned spirits" that Jesus preached to, and what did he say to them? The answer may come from the story of Noah's grandfather, Enoch, who according to Jewish tradition preached a message of condemnation to fallen angels. These fallen angels were thought to have intermarried with humans and caused the great evil on the earth that led to God's judgement with a flood. So here it would seem that Jesus' death and resurrection was a proclamation of God's judgement and victory over these evil spirits. Probably Peter is making a similar point to the one Paul makes in Col 2:15 – "having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross".

### **The Ark and Salvation**

The story of Noah had many parallels with the situation of Peter's readers. Like Noah's family they were a righteous minority in a godless society. Like Noah they sought to be witnesses by living in obedience to God, but experienced rejection. Before the flood, there was a long period of waiting, during which God gave people the chance to repent - and similarly God is patient in withholding the final judgement in our day, giving people the opportunity to be saved. But most importantly, Noah and his family were eventually saved. Peter encourages us with the thought that whatever circumstances we are in, our faithfulness to Jesus means that we will be saved from condemnation when he returns again.

### **The Flood and Baptism**

Peter also sees a parallel between the flood and baptism. He reminds his readers of the "pledge" they made of lifelong faithfulness to God at their baptism. The baptism ceremony itself doesn't save us, and neither does it morally transform us. Rather it publicly declares our allegiance to the one who has died, been raised from the dead, and has ascended into heaven. Again, probably reiterating

the thought of verse 19 in an easier to understand way, Peter claims that Jesus' resurrection and ascension has declared his supremacy over all powers - human, angelic and demonic. Though Jesus' death on the cross could have been interpreted as a shameful defeat, his resurrection and ascension have demonstrated beyond all doubt that God has vindicated him and exalted him, and that no power, human or demonic can truly harm us because we are safe in him.

## 1 Peter 4:1-6

*<sup>1</sup>Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup>so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>The time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. <sup>4</sup>With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; <sup>5</sup>but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does.*

### Think Like Jesus

Having seen how Jesus endured suffering and was then glorified by God, we are now urged to take the same attitude to suffering that he did. Interestingly, Peter seems to suggest here that experiencing suffering is directly related to our battle against sin. If we are willing to resist sin even to the point of suffering, then we have truly got our perspective in life right. We are no longer living to gratify the desires of our “flesh”, but rather we are focused, as Jesus was, on doing the will of God.

### Passionate Living

When the New Testament talks about *flesh*, it is not merely talking about our bodies, but about the fallen state of our humanity. Our desires have become corrupted and introverted. Rather than living to please God, we live to gratify our own desires. This is evidenced in the way that those who do not know God live. They are hedonistic - indulging their appetite for food, sex, money and pleasure, with reckless abandon. They are idolaters, setting themselves up as gods, and worshipping anything that gives them pleasure. And some Christians know exactly what Peter is talking about here, because they too lived that way, before turning to Christ.

By contrast, the Christian has had a radical change of purpose in their life. The only pleasure they seek is that which comes from knowing God and pleasing him. This necessarily means taking a deeper and more long-term approach to finding joy than the hedonism of the surrounding culture. We deliberately choose the road of suffering, knowing that it leads to joy, whilst the road to short-term pleasure that so many in our lost world are taking is leading them to ultimate misery.

### Not Joining In

One trouble faced by Christians who abstain from joining in with the world's way of living, is that they will be mocked for it. Not only can the world not understand this seemingly ridiculous choice, but they are insulted that Christians should implicitly reject their lifestyle. Christians need to be firm and gracious in how they stand apart without being judgemental. This is particularly relevant for new converts to Christianity who find their new-found faith causes resentment and anger from friends and family. In any case, we have no need to be judgemental, because Peter reminds us that God himself will be doing the judging. All people, living and dead must stand before him.

Verse 6 is another difficult one to understand, but perhaps Peter is addressing the issue of those Christians who have actually died. What will become of them? Though they have experienced physical death which is a common experience for all people, they have been raised to newness of life in the spirit, just as Jesus was. Their death does not mean that their suffering was in vain, any

more than Jesus' death did. They share in his vindication. Death does not mean that Christians have "missed out" on life, nor that unbelievers have "got away" with sin - both will face God the judge and receive either reward or punishment.

## 1 Peter 4:7-11

*<sup>7</sup>The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup>As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: <sup>11</sup>whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies--in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

### Be Ready For The End

We might be tempted to be cynical about the first half of verse 7. Writing 2000 years ago, Peter tells his readers that the end of all things is “at hand”. And yet here we are, still waiting for Jesus’ return. So was Peter wrong? Well maybe he did expect Jesus to return in his lifetime, but actually we see in 2 Peter 3:8-9, that he did realise that God’s timetable can be very different from our own. If the second coming seems delayed to us, it is because of God’s great mercy, in giving many the chance to be saved, and for the gospel to go out to all nations.

The important thing is for us to be ready and expectant. It is not for us to know the times and dates, but we can be prepared. This involves being *self-controlled*, resisting temptation to sin, and continuing to live righteous lives. It also involves being *sober minded* - being clear thinkers about what really matters in life, and how we should be living to please the Lord. We are also called to *pray* - our prayers will be most effective if we are holy in both our minds and our bodies, resisting temptation and setting our minds on the kingdom of God.

### Love One Another

Though we are to live with a constant awareness that we are in the last days, this does not mean that we lose focus on the task at hand in the present. We are not to isolate ourselves to achieve the holy and self-controlled life of prayer Peter has just described. We need each other. Most important is the command to *love one another*. Of course, this command is hardly controversial, but we need to regularly remind ourselves of its importance. Even in the church there will be tensions and differences of opinion from time to time, and these are occasions for us to demonstrate love.

According to Peter, *love covers a multitude of sins*. It is hard to know exactly what is meant by this quote from , but maybe the idea is that not only will there be less sin in a community that loves one another, but that when there is love, those who sin are restored quickly. In a community lacking love, one person’s sin becomes the occasion for others to sin, whether by judgementalism or gossip or refusal to forgive.

### Serve One Another

Biblical love is not merely emotion, although it is not emotionless. It must manifest itself in cheerful and sacrificial self-giving on behalf of others. We see this here, as Peter exhorts us to be hospitable without grumbling. Showing hospitality is something that most Christians love to do, but it is easy for the joy of serving someone to turn to grumbling when we feel that too much is being expected of us. The Christian must learn to remain cheerful even when giving beyond their comfort levels, following the example of Jesus who gave not out of his surplus but poured himself out for others.

Hospitality is but one example of the ways we can demonstrate our love through service. Verse 10 recognises that there is a wide variety of gifts given by God. The point of these gifts is not to boost our own egos, or to give us a sense of fulfilment or self importance. Rather, we are given them to serve each other. They are gifts of *grace*, not simply because we don't deserve them, but because as we use them we minister God's grace to each other. So we are to view our spiritual gifts in the same way we should view our money and possessions. They are *God's property*, entrusted to us to use in the service of his kingdom.

We are also given instruction in how we are to use our gifts. First we are to use them *seriously*. If God has given you a speaking gift, whether it be preaching, evangelising, prophesying or encouraging, then you should take seriously the enormous privilege of speaking God's words to people. We do not grasp for opportunities for our own voice or opinions to be heard. Rather we desire to faithfully convey the message that God has given us.

Second we are to use them *wholeheartedly*. This can only be done by drawing on God's strength. Many forms of serving are physically and emotionally draining. We will simply run ourselves into the ground if we are not relying on the Spirit's energising power to keep us going.

### **The Goal of Service**

What is the ultimate goal of using our gifts? It is fairly obvious that it is not for our own personal benefit, although we will benefit from using them. But the primary goal is not even simply blessing other people. The driving force behind our serving others is a desire that God is glorified and that Jesus receives the praise he deserves. If we serve in our own strength, then we are probably motivated by our own glory. But if love for God is truly our driving force, then it will manifest itself naturally in love for others, and so bring glory to God.

## 1 Peter 4:12-19

*<sup>12</sup>Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup>But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. <sup>14</sup>If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. <sup>15</sup>But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. <sup>16</sup>Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. <sup>17</sup>For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? <sup>18</sup>And "If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?" <sup>19</sup>Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.*

### Rejoice in Sufferings

So far, the letter of 1 Peter has pointed us to Jesus as the example of how we should react to suffering for the sake of the gospel. We are now told that this type of suffering is actually something that should be expected. There is nothing strange about it. Jesus warned his disciples clearly that they would face opposition to their faith. These trials may seem intense, or "fiery", but just as fire tests gold, their faith will be tested and come out purer as a result (see 1 Pet 1:7).

More than simply not being surprised, Christians are urged to *rejoice* in the face of suffering, not because we like pain, but because in unjust suffering for the gospel, we are following in the footsteps of Jesus. If we share in his suffering, then we too will share in his glory. It is a future perspective that enables us to rejoice in hardship. If we live only for the present, then we will be miserable whenever our circumstances are not to our liking.

### Blessing in Sufferings

In Matt 5:10, Jesus said "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Here Peter applies this promise of blessing directly to his readers. They are being insulted because they follow Jesus, and so they are inheritors of a blessing. The blessing Peter has in mind is the Spirit of God he has poured out upon us. God's presence will be especially felt by those going through suffering.

Again Peter is keen to point out that suffering is not a blessing merely because it is suffering. After all if you commit a crime you can hardly expect to be blessed by God if you suffer for it. And similarly if you are a meddlesome interferer, then don't consider it a validation of your faith that people are hostile to you. No, the only suffering we embrace in this way is the suffering that comes because of our commitment to righteousness. Verse 17 indicates that at least some suffering faced by Christians may actually be the discipline of God. We need to prayerfully consider when we are suffering whether God is convicting us of sin and calling us to repentance.

It is a valid question to ask whether other forms of suffering apart from persecution should be rejoiced in. Not all suffering is caused by either faith or sin. Suffering such as sickness or bereavement or being the victim of crime also comes the way of Christians from time to time. This suffering can be used for good where we allow ourselves to lean on God and look to him for the resources to overcome. But we should not resign ourselves to enduring suffering that is not for the gospel. If you are ill, then seeking the doctor's help is not wrong, and neither is praying for healing.

We can embrace what God is doing in us through the suffering without feeling guilty for seeking to be free from the suffering.

**Trusting through Sufferings**

So God does exercise discipline on his children during this life, in order that we may be made holy. And he allows us to experience suffering for the gospel, to purify our faith, and ultimately to glorify us. These two forms of suffering then, can be said to be in “the will of God” for us. Though the idea that suffering could be in the will of God is rejected by many Christians, Peter seems to have no problem with the concept, stating it clearly in verse 19. He urges us therefore to put our trust in our faithful Creator, and continue to do good, no matter what suffering may result. This is backed up by the solemn thought, that however bad the persecution may seem for the believer, things will be much worse at the final judgement for the unbeliever. Our suffering is only for a limited time, and our endurance will be richly rewarded.

## 1 Peter 5:1-4

<sup>1</sup>So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: <sup>2</sup>shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; <sup>3</sup>not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. <sup>4</sup>And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

### Shepherds like Christ

Peter now appeals to the “elders” of the church - those who are leaders, who are “older” in the sense that they are spiritually mature people, gifted to lead, and respected by the community. Peter too is an elder, and the suffering of Jesus he has talked about in this letter is something that he witnessed first-hand. He knows what he is talking about when he asks us to model ourselves on Jesus. He also mentions that he is looking to share in future glory that will be revealed - in other words, he is practising what he is preaching, and living with his hope set on Christ’s return.

He asks them to behave as “shepherds”. What better way of exercising leadership in the church that to model ourselves on Jesus, the Good Shepherd? The emphasis here is not primarily on authority, but on caring protection. Those who are leaders are not there just to set the program and enforce the doctrine of a church, but to care for those God has entrusted to them. The elders are also reminded that the flock belongs to God not to them. They therefore are to be mindful that they have to give an account for their care of his sheep.

### The Heart of Eldership

Again drawing on the example of Christ, Peter calls the elders to lead in the right way. They should *watch over* people - not meaning that they can be nosey or interfering, but that they should watch out for those who are being particularly hard pressed by persecution so that they can offer loving support and encouragement. They should be motivated not by duty but by *willingness*. This can only be the case if they learn to love the people under their care. Then they will be willing to take the time and effort to look after these people rather than viewing their problems as unwanted interruptions in the busy life of a church leader.

They are also not to be motivated by *dishonest gain*. Perhaps this relates to the fact that the elders would be entrusted with spending the money given by church members. While they had a right to earn a living for their kingdom work, they were not to dishonestly use that money. Those called into Christian leadership must examine their hearts to ensure they are not allowing the love of money to pull them away from their first love for the Lord. It brings great harm to the witness of the church when a leader is seen to be dishonest or greedy with money.

Elders are also not to *lord it over* those in their charge. This is sadly a tendency for many in positions of responsibility both inside and outside the church. This is essentially a call to humility - to a type of leadership that does not find validation in commanding people, but in setting an example they gladly follow. A humble leader finds their sense of identity in who they are in Christ, not their personal importance as having a named title – “elder” - in the church. While they will take their leadership responsibilities seriously, they will not proudly refuse to hear the ideas and concerns of others.

Finally, they are to *be examples* to the flock. This would be particularly relevant in the context of persecution. If the leaders did not respond well, or compromised to avoid trouble, then how would the other believers behave? No, an elder must make sure that they practise what they preach, and let their lives serve as an inspiration to the other believers. This implies that elders should be willing share their lives with other believers, showing hospitality and sharing fellowship, rather than becoming disconnected from “ordinary” believers because they are too busy with the business side of leading a church.

The task of leading a church through such difficult circumstances is a daunting one, so Peter encourages elders with the thought that they will be well rewarded with an unfading crown of glory when Jesus - the Chief Shepherd returns. Being motivated by money or human reward is shameful, but being motivated by the approval of God is quite appropriate and fitting for any Christian.

So this passage teaches that elders are not simply to be those who are gifted at public speaking or leading meetings, but those whose lives are exemplary, and who can be an inspiration and encouragement to other Christians. Most importantly, their motives are to be right - a love for the Lord and for his people, not a love for power and self-importance. Biblical leadership does not model itself on the methods of politicians, military leaders or successful businessmen, but on Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

## 1 Peter 5:5-7

*<sup>5</sup>Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>6</sup>Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, <sup>7</sup>casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*

### Be Humble

Peter has been calling the elders to lead in a way that is humble and servant-hearted, and so it is only appropriate that he now calls the rest of the church to humbly submit to their authority. Joyful recognition of God-given authority is an attitude we are called to throughout Scripture. It flows from our ultimate submission to God himself - we bow the knee to his Lordship, and so we gladly acknowledge him by obeying those he has called to serve us by exercising oversight. Here, Peter particularly calls the young to submit, knowing that sometimes they can be overly independently minded, and so should learn to appreciate the wisdom of those further on in their walk with God. Obviously elders should seek to be encouragers of the zeal of youth and ensure it is channelled in the right way, rather than simply attempting to quash youthful enthusiasm.

The call to humility is extended to the whole community, with a reminder from Proverbs that the proud will find God himself opposing them, while the humble are blessed with his grace. There is a second promise for those who are willing to humble themselves, that God himself will see to it that they are exalted at the proper time. This means that the Christian does not need to push themselves forward and fight for recognition and attention in the way many in the world do. Rather we simply get on with faithfully serving God, and trusting him to elevate us in his way and his timing. Ultimately, for many of Peter's readers, the humiliation they were experiencing was due to standing as a Christian, and they had to trust God that they would be eventually vindicated at the coming of Jesus, even if in this life they find themselves socially marginalised.

### He Cares

Many people will find the call to be humble a hard one to take, because they are already inwardly struggling with the humble circumstances of their life and ministry. Peter encourages them with the thought that God genuinely cares for them. Though they may not be viewed as anyone important in the eyes of others, in God's sight they are precious. They can give over all their anxiety to him, because he has their best interests at heart and is in control of their circumstances. This is of course easier said than done. Jesus commanded us not to worry about our lives in Matt 6:25, but worry seems to come naturally to most of us. The answer comes in growing in our understanding of how much God cares for us. When we realise this, we know we can trust him, and live in the freedom from fear and anxiety which that assurance will bring.

## 1 Peter 5:8-11

<sup>8</sup>*Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.* <sup>9</sup>*Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.* <sup>10</sup>*And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.* <sup>11</sup>*To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

### The Real Enemy

Although we can and should live lives free from anxiety, Peter does not mean to promote careless living, as though we can passively wander through life and expect God to automatically keep us out of harm's way. No, he calls us yet again to clear-headedness and mental alertness. There is a real enemy and he wants to do real harm to Christians. This truth gives us perspective on where the real battle lies. Though people may be hostile to us, we are not hostile to them, because we know that behind their actions is the work of the devil.

Knowledge that there is an enemy will also help us to be on our guard. We will pray for protection for ourselves and others. And we will be especially on our guard against temptation, knowing that the devil wants our moral collapse even more than he wants our physical harm. We are called to resist the devil, which implies that God will give us the resources to withstand him. We do not need to be on the run. In Ephesians 6:16 we are told that it is the shield of faith that will help us repel the fiery darts that the devil will throw at us, and here again it is *faith* that enables us to stand firm.

### The God of All Grace

Peter also comforts the readers going through hardships with the thought that their fellow believers around the world are enduring similar trials. They are not alone, and they can take heart from the examples of faith and testimonies of God's faithfulness from other believers. We should be eager to hear the stories of other believers, both contemporary and from church history, who have trusted God and overcome adversity. We should also be those who share with others the stories of God's grace in our own lives so that they may be encouraged to have faith in similar situations.

Ultimately, it is God's grace, rather than just the inspiration of other people, that will sustain us to go through the trials and hardships unique to our own lives. Our suffering is only for a *little while*, but the glory in Christ we have been called to is *eternal*. If we were to attempt to endure troubles in our own strength alone, then we would surely fail, but by God's grace we are able to stand *strong, firm and steadfast*.

We often think of glory as being reserved for God alone, but repeatedly in this letter, and elsewhere in the New Testament, we are encouraged with the thought that we ourselves will be exalted, given glory and even crowned! This does not mean we will be worshiped - worship is reserved for God alone - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the amazing thing is that when Jesus returns we will be given honour and restored to the full glory of being the image bearers of God that we were created to be. It is a humbling thought that the God who will not share his glory with another, freely offers to make us glorious. It is this wonderful hope that should sustain us even when our society considers our faith to be shameful.

## 1 Peter 5:12-14

<sup>12</sup>By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. <sup>13</sup>She who is at Babylon, who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. <sup>14</sup>Greet one another with the kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

### Stand Fast

So Peter comes to the end of his letter, and thanks Silas who in some way helped him with the letter, perhaps by writing it down, or maybe by delivering it. Either way, Peter was grateful to have someone who he could trust as a faithful brother. The letter itself is relatively brief, and so Peter has focused on what is important - to *encourage* the believers with practical commands and to *declare the true grace of God* to them. If they are to stand firm, it can only be on the truth and in the grace of God. Christians do not seek to encourage one another with empty platitudes like so many in the world do (“fingers crossed”, “touch wood” etc), but with the truth of God’s word.

### Greetings

Peter sends greetings from his church, in “Babylon”, the place where the Jewish people historically were in exile, as God’s people in a foreign land. He knows what they are going through, and reminds them of the oneness of all Christian congregations - we have all been *chosen together*. This should encourage warmth between believers within a church and between churches.

This love is expressed here by the greetings that are sent from Peter’s church to his readers, and the encouragement for all believers to greet each other with the *kiss of love* - which speaks of genuine love for one another as brothers and sisters, rather than mere polite but cold greetings. Peter himself speaks of Mark as his “son” - which serves as an example of how he viewed his fellow believers as family members. The closing words of the epistle are of *peace* to all who are in Christ. Jesus is the foundation for our peace - he has brought us peace with God, and he brings us peace in the midst of whatever turmoil we may be living in.

## Appendix – Study Notes on 1 Peter

This section consists mainly of notes I made while reading the Baker Exegetical Commentary on 1 Peter by Karen Jobes, and the Revised Expositor's Bible Commentary by J Darryl Charles. In addition there are some notes from the New American Commentary on 1 & 2 Peter and Jude by Thomas Schreiner. It also includes some of my own notes and thoughts on the book of 1 Peter.

### Notes on 1 Peter 1:1-2

1:1 the five provinces mentioned constitute all of Asia Minor (Turkey) north of the Taurus mountain range.

1:2 notice the Trinitarian formula

1:2 "grace and peace" echoes Num 6:24-26 "the LORD be *gracious* to you; ... and give you *peace*"

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

1:1 p298 "From the perspective of the new covenant, the real "Diaspora" is not the Jewish people; it is the community of Christian saints scattered throughout the world. These are "exiles" who are called to be *in* but not *of* this world. Rightly understood, exile is not withdrawal or isolation; rather, it is the awareness that we are not *fully* at home, given the fact that our allegiance is to something beyond this world"

1:2 "sprinkling" speaks of cleansing and consecration

1:2 p299 "It is the Spirit who is the operative agent in conforming the believer to the image of Christ, for he awakens within the desire for holiness, brings conviction of impediments to holiness, supplies empowerment to attain holiness, and gives assurance that God is, in fact, making us holy."

#### Karen Jobes BEC

1:1 p70 - because the divine initiative is in view, the Spirit here is the instrument, or agency, by which God makes his electing foreknowledge operative in the lives of those who come to faith in Christ.

1:1 p70 – "The electing purpose of God is made real by the faith of believers, but that faith is itself a completely gracious act of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who first stirs in the heart a reaching toward God, quickens one's understanding of the gospel, convicts of sin, reassures of pardon, and transforms the character by his fruit of virtues."

1:2 "sprinkling" is an allusion to Ex 24 - animal blood was sprinkled on the people to establish the first covenant. Also to Exek 36:24-28 where water is sprinkled on the people to cleanse them from impurities and idolatry.

(on Ex 24:3,7) p72 "Even though the human heart is undeniably depraved, there is nevertheless at the same time a deep urge within people to obey God. The inability to do so is frustrating to the point of despair, but because human beings bear the image of God, there is an impulse to be what he created us to be. The old covenant was powerless to bring that innate desire to complete

realization. But through Jesus, 'everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses' (Acts 13:39, TNIV)

### Notes on 1 Peter 1:3-5

1:3-4 The hymn is identical to 2 Cor 1:3 (Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort) and Eph 1:3 (Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places).

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

1:3 "It is important to be future-oriented when sojourning, for in this world there will be misunderstanding, slander and persecution for one's faith."

1:3 "If even death is subject to Christ, the Christian lives with hope and has nothing to fear."

1:3 "the resurrection not only validates Christian experience and proclamation, it is also assurance of the inheritance that lies in the future."

1:5 Salvation has both temporal as well as eschatological dimensions

#### Karen Jobes BEC

1:3 p82 the Gk word translated mercy (*eleos*) was used in the ancient Gk translations of the parallel passages of Ex 20:6 and Deut 5:10 to translate the Hebrew *hesed* (gracious mercy).

1:3 p83 argues that concept of new birth is an allusion to Jn 3 contra suggestion that it borrows from pagan mystery religions

1:3 "... God is not Father by virtue of his role as Creator but rather because of his distinctive role in the new birth of those whom he has chosen to be set apart for the new covenant in Christ."

1:4 p84 Jobes quotes Hort saying that the "inheritance" refers to both the new life and the living hope.

1:4 p85 "Christian hope is everliving because Christ, the ground of that hope, is everliving"

1:4 Beare (quoted by Jobes p85) - "the inheritance is untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time; it is compounded of immortality, purity and beauty"

1:4 Incorruptible inheritance possibly an allusion to Matt 6:19-21 (do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...) & Luke 12:33 (treasure in heaven)

1:5 p87 "The trials provoked by Christian faith are implicitly a temptation to renounce that faith, at least to the extent that such trials can be avoided" - see Lord's Prayer Matt 6:13 - lead us not into *trials* / *temptation* is same word as in 1 Pet 1:6.

1:5 p87 - "last times" points to the parousia

1:5 p88 word "salvation" can variously mean deliverance from physical danger, from sin, and reward for standing firm in the face of persecution.

p88 “In 1 Peter, the benefits of the new birth are a present reality, but salvation is yet to be revealed at the end of history.”

p88 “in Peter’s thought, *soteria* (salvation) refers to the ultimate deliverance that is the final goal of redemptive history and in which believers in Christ will partake. It is a deliverance from this current state of existence as foreigners in a world hostile to God and into a place of existence in which there will be no such dissonance. ... *soteria* is the coming inheritance, to which they are now fully entitled but do not yet fully possess.”

### Notes on 1 Peter 1:6-8

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

1:6 p302 “the suffering and trials are neither ascribed directly to God nor viewed as detrimental to one’s faith.”

1:6 p302 “Through the refining process the value of the object increases, since the object becomes purer, more genuine. “

1:7 p303 “For every trial there stands accessible to the believer an appropriate and corresponding grace (c.f. 1 Cor 10:13). No trial exists without an available source of the grace of God.”

1:9 p304 Soul refers here to the total person - the living hope is for the whole person, confirmed by and anchored in Christ’s resurrection

#### Karen Jobes BEC

1:6 p93 discusses a deliberate ambiguity “you rejoice” / “rejoice” (imperative) depending on individual current response of the readers (although considers this unlikely)

1:7 p95 “Just as physical birth bestows citizenship based on that of one’s parent, Christians have been given new birth by the divine Father bestowing on them a new citizenship and inheritance in the kingdom of God. This new identity and allegiance make them to some extent aliens in within society.”

1:9 p29 - the joy inexpressible is present, not just future

### Notes on 1 Peter 1:10-12

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

1:10-11 p305 “Gratitude for the high privilege of identification with Christ will serve as a healthy antidote to the discouragement or despondency that might be the inclination of those encountering persistent trials.”

1:10-11 reveals that there was much speculation amongst the Jews about the time, nature, manner and embodiment of the messianic age (see also John 1)

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

1:10-12 p97 Peter emphasises the privileged position we have both over the prophets and the angels. He also calls Christians, both Jew and Gentile into solidarity with the OT people of God, giving them a new heritage now that they have abandoned the empty way of their biological ancestors. They are no longer citizens of diverse nations but have been joined to the one people of God.

1:10 p98 “The Christians to whom Peter writes are not to understand themselves as practitioners of yet another new religion in the world, founded on the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, they are being privileged with the knowledge of the gospel that fulfils God’s mysterious plan as revealed to the prophets of the OT and that brings them into continuity with what God has already been doing through ancient Israel.”

1:11 p104 “Peter knows his readers also needed to understand what he himself had come to know: that the suffering and death of Jesus Christ was not an untimely accident or tragic mistake but rather a necessity that had long been foretold. After the Christ has suffered, the predictive aspect of prophecy recedes, and the prophecy becomes a confirmation for the benefit of the generation who would see the Messiah suffer, and for the generations to follow them, that they might rightly understand the cross of Jesus.”

### **Notes on 1 Peter 1:13-16**

#### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p307 “The Christian lifestyle, according to Peter, takes on a conspicuous shape: it will be mentally prepared, self-controlled, anchored in divine grace, obedient and not conforming to the desires associated with the former life, and, most important, exhibiting of the divine character of holiness. In a word, it will be countercultural.”

p308 1:13 “gird up the loins of your mind” - the idea being conveyed is the need to be prepared for *whatever* may come.

p308 1:13 sober-minded speaks of being self-controlled / disciplined

p308 1:13 “ethics is eschatologically motivated” – “Hope is rooted in one’s expectation of future reward; therefore, one can persevere and live a prepared, disciplined life.”

p308 1:13 - this is not just willpower, but we draw from divine grace

p308 1:16 - the call to be holy is a call to emulate the Lord

#### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p108 Jobes entitles section 1:13-2:3 “Be what you are” & v13-21 is “Be children of the Father” - like father, like son

cites Clowney p61 “the imperatives of Christian living always begin with ‘therefore’”

p110 1:13 – “set your hope *fully*” speaks of an undivided confidence - i.e. not putting confidence in any of the things the world trusts in

p110 “The mind is not to be understood narrowly as denoting only the intellectual life but as that which determines conduct. The avoidance of intoxication is certainly included, especially in any society where those who have no hope often take refuge in drunkenness. Peter wishes his readers to avoid and form of mental or spiritual intoxication that would confuse the reality that Christ has revealed and deflect them from a life steadfastly fixed on the grace of Christ. Self control of the mind facilitates prayer (1 Pet 4:7) and an awareness of the devil's ways (5:8).”

p112 1:14 “To be holy means that Christians must conform their thinking and behaviour to God's character”

p112 “By living in covenant with God, ancient Israel would be set apart from the ways of the world. For God's ways are distinct from the ways of a fallen world, and he does not deal with the world on its own terms (e.g. my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways (Isa 55:8)). Therefore, his people are to identify with him by being set apart and by relating to the world on the terms that God prescribes.”

p113 “to be holy requires a change in one's way of life from before, when one's behaviour was determined by unrestrained impulses to sin, even in ways accepted by society. God's call that has brought Christians to Christ is also a call to deny those sinful impulses and abstain from certain social customs and practices, making one a stranger within one's own society.”

### Notes on 1 Peter 1:17-21

Christ as sacrificial lamb (c.f Ex 12:5, Isa 52:13-53:12)

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

1:18-20 p310 “In Petrine theology there is no tension between divine judgement and divine mercy”

p310 Redemption - uses the metaphor of the slave market - “It speaks to the condition of bondage caused by sin, to the beneficence of the one buying the slave, to the costly nature of the redemptive transaction, and to the state of freedom (i.e., the household) into which the redeemed is brought.”

#### Karen Jobes BEC

p115 “The special privilege of calling God “Father” does not excuse the believer from nevertheless being judged by God, because every person will be judged by God according to the same standard”.

p119 is open to the “empty way of life” being Gentile or Jewish – “useless” describes all cultural systems that are not based on the reality of Christ. “He asks his readers to exchange the heritage handed down by their ancestors - whether Jewish or Gentile - for the heritage of ancient Israel as interpreted through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

#### Tom Schreiner NAC

p83 “... no dichotomy exists between judgement according to works and God's grace. Good works are evidence that God has truly begotten (1 Pet 1:3) a person.”

## Notes on 1 Peter 1:22-25

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p311 - love for one another was particularly important in a hostile environment, where they needed to stand together to endure persecution

p311 - quotation from Isa 40 brings to mind the experience of Israel in exile, where God brings comfort to his people

### Karen Jobes BEC

p123 - "The Christian life cannot be lived authentically in isolation"

p124 "For Peter, obedience to the truth of the gospel is not merely intellectual assent to doctrine but must result in a transformation of how Christians treat others, because moral transformation is a central purpose of Christ's redemption."

p126 on Isa 40 - God's promises to redeem his people exiled in Babylon: "These promises were more than historical prophecies for the future of Israel; they were also, perhaps more importantly, eschatological revelations of God's final redemption of humankind."

p127 "Remarkably, Peter does not hesitate to redirect covenant language first addressed to Israel in exile to his first-century Christian readers in Asia Minor."

## Notes on 1 Peter 2:1-3

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p313 - three times the word *pan*, "all", "every" is used for emphasis

p313 - 2:2 Growth in any area of human existence is progressive, incremental. This growth, it goes without saying, is dependent on food as nourishment.

p313 - 2:3 The points of contact between Psalm 34 and 1 Peter become immediately apparent: trials and difficulties, affliction, deliverance from fear, salvation, and a pronounced reverential fear and trust in the Lord. The remainder of the psalm confesses divine nearness (v15ff)

### Karen Jobes BEC

p131 2:1 - The vices listed in 2:1 that must be put off are those that destroy relationships and hence that destroy community.

p132 2:2 - He uses the metaphor to instruct them to crave the things of God even as newborn babies crave milk - instinctively, eagerly, incessantly.

p132 2:2 - "Modern interpreters almost unanimously understand the referent of the "pure spiritual milk" metaphor to be the word of God, whether in the form of apostolic preaching or inscripturated in the Bible" (so Achtemeier, Barclay, Bigg, Clowney, Cranfield, Davids, Goppelt, Grudem, Kelly, Reicke, Thuren)

Grudem sees "pure" as reference to the purity of Scripture.

p139 2:3 – “Seeing God, hearing God, even touching God, does not carry the powerful connotations that “tasting” implies - making the experience of God internal to oneself.”

p139 2:3 - Ps 34 (Ps 33 in LXX) links “tasting” to “hoping” in God

p140 2:3 – “...he is not telling them to crave the word of God, as if commanding them to listen to more sermons or to read more Scripture, as good and even necessary as those activities may be. He is saying that God in Christ alone both conceives and sustains the life of the new birth. They are to crave the Lord God for spiritual nourishment.”

p140 2:3 “Peter’s readers are to crave the Lord by adopting attitudes and behaviours that will sustain the new life they have begun by faith in Christ.”

p140 2:3 -Possibly a link between 1 Pet 2:1 and Ps 34:13 “keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking lies”

### Notes on 1 Peter 2:4-5

2:5 I think Rom 12:1 “living sacrifices” allows us to read this verse also as referring to the sacrifice of ourselves

#### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p314 “Orthopraxis (i.e. right conduct) is rooted in orthodoxy, right belief.”

p314 “Typology is a chief means by which NT writers show that people, institutions and events of the old covenant find their ultimate fulfilment in the new”

p315 The stone metaphor contains a paradox that applies to Christ as well as to his disciples. Both were elected by God; both are rejected by humans. Lest the saints despair because of their rejection by the world, they are reassured of their election in the divine purpose. God considers them “chosen” and “precious”.

p315 A fitting metaphor for Peter to use who was called a rock (Matt 16:18) and a stumbling block (Matt 16:23) by Jesus.

p316 sees the sacrifices as worship, praise or petition

#### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p144 notes that if this was late and pseudonymous, we would expect “Peter” to give himself an important position in the house to bolster Catholic papal claims of Peter’s primacy.

p146 2:4 “The imagery implies two building projects, one constructed by human builders, the other by God. The human builders examine Christ and find him unfit for building upon”

p148 2:5 “When Peter describes those who come to Jesus Christ also as “living stones”, he is implying that their nature derives from the nature of the resurrected Christ”

p148 2:5 “The Christian community is portrayed as a temple, implying that now it - not a literal stone building - is the place of God’s earthly dwelling by the Holy Spirit, a place of true worship and of acceptable sacrifice.”

p148 2:5 “The placement of the Living Stone with living stones in the temple implies the close relationship of Christ with believers and their common nature as human beings. The Cornerstone is called “living” by virtue of his resurrection; the same resurrection life enlivens the stones that come to him and take their place in the new temple.”

p149 2:5 “The Christian church is not primarily a social organization but the new temple where the transformed lives of believers are offered as a sacrifice to the glory of God.”

p149 2:5 See Rev 21:2 for similar fluidity of image - the church as a city and a people

### **Notes on 1 Peter 2:6-8**

2:6 is Isaiah 28:16

2:7 is Psalm 118:22

2:8 is Isaiah 8:14

2:6 possible link with parable of wise and foolish builders r.e. judgement based on correct choice of foundation

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p316 2:8 “These verses are not teaching that people are without moral agency. The language of predestination, rather, underscores the certainty of divine retribution for those who disobey. In Scripture, divine sovereignty and human freedom coexist. Such balance is notably on display in 1 Peter, which encourages the saints with the language of sovereignty and election, while simultaneously exhorting them via paraenesis to moral earnestness.”

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p152 2:6 Peter’s readers may have been experiencing “shame” as a result of conversion to Christ - lowering their social status

p154 2:8 rejection of Christ is not an amoral decision; it is itself an instance of sin.

2:8 “disobey the word” see also 3:1 “disobey the word” and 4:17 “disobey the good news of God”

p155 cites Goppelt: “Christ is laid across the path of humanity on its course into the future. In the encounter with him each person is changed: one for salvation, another for destruction. ... One cannot simply step over Jesus to go on about the daily routine and pass him by to build a future. Whoever encounters him is inescapably changed through the encounter. Either one sees and becomes “a living stone” or one stumbles as a blind person over Christ and comes to ruin, falling short, i.e., of one’s Creator and Redeemer and thereby of one’s destiny. “

2:8 p155 on predestined to disobey: "This is an exegetical crux that cannot help but be influenced by one's theology, ..."

France 34, "not that certain people were destined not to believe, but that God's decree is that those who do not believe will stumble and fall"

Calvin, Grudem, and others argue the appointment is to disbelief, which then necessarily results in stumbling

Michaels 107 - appointment of Christ as stone and of unbelievers to stumbling is one appointment with a twofold result

p156 "It is impossible to escape the force of Peter's teaching that God has sovereignly determined both the destiny of those who come to Christ and of those who disobey his word and reject his gospel."

### Notes on 1 Peter 2:9-10

Ex 19:5-6 "you will be my treasured possession, ... you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"

Deut 7:6 "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"

Deut 10:15 "Yet the LORD set his affection on your forefathers and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, as it is today."

1 Sam 12:22 "For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own."

Isa 43:20 "my people, my chosen"

Isa 43:21 "the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise."

Isa 62:2 "The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow"

Hos 2:23 "I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'"

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p318 2:9 As a "holy nation" the readers are reminded again that they are consecrated to God and thus set apart, in the sense of being different, from the world. They will resist conformity to the world because of their ultimate allegiance.

p318 2:9 The church's mission, simply put, is to witness to the splendour of moral transformation

p318 2:10 The saints are simultaneously called out of something - spiritual darkness - and to something far greater - spiritual illumination leading to moral transformation.

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p158 2:9 “Here again, Peter unabashedly applies terms to his Christian readers that were used previously only to describe God’s chosen nation of ancient Israel.”

p159 “As Peter later teaches, this declaration of praise is not simply verbal but a life lived righteously”

p159 “The understanding of Christians that they formed a new race among humanity was precisely one of the points for which they were criticized and persecuted by first century pagan society” & goes on to give examples

p161 priesthood not referring to clerical authority but to the theme of obedience and holiness

p161 “The kingdom of God is composed of believers who must think of themselves as holy with respect to the world, set apart for purity and a purpose demanded by God. This is the priesthood that serves the King of the universe.”

p161 on *holy nation* “it refers not so much to their moral status but to their calling as a people set apart for God, and therefore a calling to moral quality”

p162 2:9 “to the extent that government formulates policy directly bearing on moral and ethical issues ... Christians still have to face the problems raised by holding dual citizenship”

2:9 “a special possession” - all things are God's, but his people belong to him in a unique way

p163 2:10 is Peter saying that the church is the fulfilment of the prophecy of Hos 2 - the restoration of the holy nation

### **Notes on 1 Peter 2:11-12**

v12 Christians as a whole today are often spoken of as “evildoers” - bigoted, sexist, homophobic etc, but we may still hope for those whose lives we touch to find themselves pleasantly surprised by our goodness and kindness, which will serve to break down their prejudice against the gospel

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

v12 p319 “The veracity of Christian truth claims, one may infer from Petrine teaching, is demonstrated to the extent, and only to the extent, that the Christian lifestyle is *ethically viable*. This will entail translating Christian ethics in relevant ways to the pagan mindset - ways suggested in the material that immediately follows (2:13-3:7)”

p320 “...doing good is the basis for Christian credibility, since it is a standard acknowledged by pagan unbelievers themselves”

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p165 this section warns against responding with hostility on one hand or privatising religion on the other

p165 Christians must be prepared, if necessary, to suffer unjustly and without retaliation for holding to their convictions and values as followers of Jesus Christ.

p167 11-12 calls this section “Lifestyle Evangelism”

p167 11-12 living with a “visitor mind-set”

p168 v11 the phrase “resident alien” is from Gen 23:4 LXX where Abraham is a “resident alien” and a “visiting stranger” among the Hittites

p168 v11 we are citizens first of God’s holy nation, and therefore not primarily citizens of the society in which we live

p170 v12 the soul here refers to the whole person, not just the incorporeal part of us

p170 v12 “in addition to the usual list of carnal desires, one could also perhaps add the carnal desire to be accepted by society, which motivates ungodly behaviour that is nevertheless socially acceptable”

p170 v12 “Peter expects that his readers can live in a way that will be recognized as good even by the standards of unbelieving pagans, which “presupposes overlap between Christian and non-Christian constellations of values” (Volf 1994:25). The implication of this overlap is that Peter does not seem to be thinking in binary categories that characterize society as evil and the Christian community as good”

v12 p171 “Peter challenges his readers to live by Christian values and, when they conflict with those of society to be willing to endure graciously the grief and alienation that will inevitably result.”

v12 p172 “day of visitation” most likely refers to final judgement due to Peter’s dependence on Isaiah

v12 p172 “The good reputation Christians are to strive for among non-Christians is an emphasis from the earliest days of the church (e.g. 1 Thess 4:11-12; 1 Cor 10:32; Col 4:5; 1 Tim 3:7)”

v11 p172 “spiritual warfare” = where human desires war against new life in Christ

“Living as a Christian first requires the resolve to abstain from those desires stimulated and validated by ungodly social values, which do violence to the Christian's relationship with God”

### **Notes on 1 Peter 2:13-15**

v13 Possibly Peter writes this here to clear up a potential misunderstanding. Though we are citizens of a new nation, this does not mean we no longer consider ourselves to be citizens of the society in which we live.

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p321 sees Matt 22:21 “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and God what is God’s” as background to this section

p321 “Peter was under no illusions: Christians must live their lives against the backdrop of authorities that at best tolerate their faith and at worst persecute them for their faith.”

p321 “To ‘submit’ is a form of honour and respect, and Peter's concern is that Christians be motivated by respect at every level”

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p177 our freedom is to serve God. It is not an escape from service but a change of master.

## **Notes on 1 Peter 2:16-20**

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

v18 p323 term Peter uses for slaves is not *douloi* but *oiketai* - household or domestic servants. Treatment of household *oiketai* varied greatly; some were treated harshly, while some were treated with respect and considered members of the family.

v20 p324 “one endures hardship, it must be stressed, not out of Stoic indifference or Stoic self-sufficiency, but out of “conscience before God”

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p180 v18-25 Peter is pointing to the slave as a paradigm for a Christian believer

p182 Peter uses a household code, familiar to the Graeco-Roman cultures, but as its basis is not a philosophy of the Supreme Good but the new life in Christ. By using the slave-master, wife-husband, and child-parent pairs, NT writers were deliberately engaging their culture with its own vocabulary though subverting some of its ideas along the way.

p183 household codes (e.g. Plato's) stressed accepting one's "station" and not aspiring to roles of another (believing it to be divinely appointed). Child, woman and slave were to submit to the man's authority as head of the household. Foreign religions were judged on whether they ensured people stayed within their station.

p185 “Unlike the Greek writers, Peter directly addresses both slaves and wives, assuming that both have a moral responsibility for their own behaviour that exceeds social expectations of that day.”

p185 “While some modern interpreters consider the NT household codes to be hopelessly chauvinistic, they fail to read the codes against their contemporary literature, which shows that the NT writers actually subverted cultural expectations by elevating the slave and the wife with unparalleled dignity.”

p185 “The second distinctive between Greek writings and Peter's instructions to Christian slaves and wives is that he rejects the expectation that a slave must worship his or her master's god and a wife must worship her husband”

p185 “First century social expectations of the wife were quite different from those of our own society, where both husband and wife may have friendships apart from the other and be of different religions without provoking accusations of perverting the social order. This large difference in

social expectations suggests that we must be thoughtful about how these biblical instructions are to be observed by Christians today.”

### Notes on 1 Peter 2:21-25

Isa 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Matt 8:17 quotes Isa 53:4 “This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases’”

Peter quotes Isa 53:5 “by his wounds we are healed”

v23 has concept of Jesus placing worth on God's evaluation (judgement) of him rather than human opinions/accusations

v24 it is very surprising that in this epistle devoted to suffering, Peter does not seem to refer at all to sickness. Even quoting from Isaiah his focus is on sin not sickness. This despite the fact that Peter had been used by God in healing. It underscores the fact that Peter's primary concern in this epistle is persecution, not generic suffering.

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p325 v24 “That Christ did so ‘in his body’ accents his identification with the human situation as a vicarious sufferer; Jesus is representative through his suffering”, ... suffering has a redemptive element

### Karen Jobes BEC

p187 v21 Slaves, the lowest social class in Greco-Roman society, have to submit to even unjust masters, and they therefore are here paradigmatic for the status of all Christians... Regardless of one's social status, Christians are to consider themselves to be slaves to God, and so the actual slave who is obedient to his master exemplifies that role for the entire Christian community

p187 Peter does not address slave masters, or the parent child relationship because his focus is on the least powerful adults of society and how they should conduct themselves as Christians.

p188 “The Son of God has dignified even the lowliest in society by becoming like them in their incarnation.”

p189 “As Christians live out their calling in obedience to God even within unjust social structures, they are subverting the status quo and opening a new way of thinking.”

p190 “The direct transformation of society's structures, even those that are patently unjust, does not seem to be the goal of the NT writers. Rather, it is the transformation of the believer regardless of one's situation that is the primary concern.”

p191 “Responding righteously to unjust suffering is commendable in God's sight, but *charis* in this context also implies that God's special favour rests upon the righteous sufferer of injustice, further enabling that one to behave in a manner that is commendable by God.”

p192 - this suffering is not sickness, or result of sin or mistakes, but specifically suffering for being a Christian. We are exhorted to keep on doing good even if suffering continues to be the result.

p194 helpful chart showing all allusions to Isa 53 in this section, also showing links to Mark's passion account

p195 "Because Jesus suffered a death reserved for slaves under Roman law, his identity as Isaiah's Suffering Servant (slave) is corroborated"

p196 Greek word for example is stronger – "it suggests the closest of copies". Jesus is therefore not *an* example, but *the* paradigm

p196 "...one cannot step into the footsteps of Jesus and head off in any other direction than the direction he took, and his footsteps lead to the cross, through the grave, and onward to glory"

p199 - the Suffering Servant is also the holy nation in Isaiah (see 41:8-11), so we as the holy nation suffer just as Christ did

p200 Achtemeier: "Peter's "total appropriation of the language of Israel" for Christians is quite a different use of the OT than the prefiguration of Hebrews, the typological events found in Paul, or specific examples of the life of Christ fulfilling prophecies as found in Matthew."

### Notes on 1 Peter 3:1-7

v6 The woman is exhorted to courage – perhaps subverting social expectations that this was a masculine virtue. The men also are called to gentleness.

v1-7 modern application - wives (and slaves) may no longer be the lowest social rung in our society, but the gospel should equally be empowering to those who are at the bottom nowadays - low paid workers, immigrants perhaps - the Christian treats these people with respect and dignity.

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p327 "Hereby, Peter may be speaking to or countering the temptation toward being argumentative, nagging, or manipulative toward the unbelieving husband, which might be counterproductive."

v6 p328 "From the Genesis narrative it can be reasonably asserted that Sarah was 'forced' to trust the Lord; i.e. the path on which the Lord was directing her was *not of her own choosing*; nevertheless, it was a path she ultimately embraced by faith (Heb 11:11)."

Marshall cited by Charles: do not need to know the exact meaning of "weaker", but note that women are in a more vulnerable situation

p329 v7 "Christian faith has a revolutionary effect not only on the way men treat women but also on how they view them."

### Karen Jobes BEC

p203 v1 "The wife's reverence for God is her motivation for submitting to her husband, regardless of whether the husband is harsh or kind." ... "The Christian wife is to submit not to the expectations

of any and all men in general but to her own husband. Peter opens the door for social transformation by leaving it to the husband and wife to work out the specific way her submission is to be expressed."

p204 v1 "This direct instruction to slaves and wives implies that both have a measure of moral responsibility and choice unprecedented in Greek thought."

Prov 31:30 "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised."

p205 v3 perhaps Peter is suggesting that wives of unbelievers not adorn themselves for worship lest their husbands suspect their motives

p205 v6 the Genesis story has Abraham obeying his wife three times (Gen 16:2, 6; 21:12), and does not refer to her calling him "lord" - so Peter got this from longstanding Jewish tradition

p205 v6 perhaps the incident of Gen 12:13 (& 20) is in mind as Sarah obeys Abraham in his deceptive ruse and thus she was willing to suffer for her disobedient husband's sake. Also she was living in "unjust and frightening situation in a foreign land / hostile environment", although Jobes does not see it as necessary to select a particular passage of Genesis for background.

p206 v6 "Peter instructs Christian women ... to look ... to the founding "first lady" of God's covenant people in the tradition that they now embrace as their own. By virtue of being born again into the living hope of the gospel, Sarah has become their spiritual ancestor."

p206 Peter was not encouraging a wife to stay despite physical abuse, which was condemned by the pagan society. Rather this passage is directed towards the tension caused by her conversion.

p207 v7 discusses the possibility that this is an exhortation to husbands with unbelieving wives (or reluctant converts)

p207 v7 "Peter directly addresses the general Greco-Roman attitude of the inferiority of women by pointing out that the female is also a coheir of grace and therefore not excluded from the same privileges of grace enjoyed by the male."

p209 v7 "In the context of 1 Peter, the weaker vessel is primarily understood as physical weakness relative to men's strength. Therefore, Peter's exhortation indirectly addresses the issue of physical abuse. However, the immediate context makes it clear that the female is also weaker in the sense of social entitlement and empowerment."

p209 v7 "how ironic it is that the words that first-century slaves and wives would have read as affirming and empowering are criticized by some today as enslaving and oppressive. When read within its original historical setting, these verses become a call to social transformation within the Christian community, allowing it to become an alternate society based on God's redemptive plan."

p210 v1-7 "Peter emphasizes the evangelistic and apologetic value of submission within the household. Paul, in contrast, roots the submission of the wife to the husband in the relationship

between Christ and the church and in the creation of marriage as a one-flesh union. (Eph 5:21-3) ... While we must not simply conflate Peter's thought with Paul's, we also must not conclude that Peter's teaching on submission is simply posturing to win favour for Christianity in the eyes of a pagan society."

p210 "On [Paul's] model of Christ's love for his church and the church's submission to Christ, marital love is understood as the resolve to live one's entire life totally committed to the well-being of one's spouse in every decision."

Jobes quotes an evangelical "I believe in a wife submitting to her husband, but I don't believe the husband ever has the right to demand it."

p211 "Peter, unlike Paul, is addressing the situation where the husband is not a Christian and does not love his wife as Christ loved the church."

p212 "Churches must consider how their position on the role of women within the Christian community speaks to the larger social order. Therefore, the specific expressions of appropriate submission must be culturally defined."

p212 "The church today is right to uphold a biblical order within marriage that mirrors the relationship of Christ and his church, but it should also follow Peter's wisdom and refrain from trying to specify what that must look like in every case."

### Notes on 1 Peter 3:8-12

Quote is from Psalm 34:12-16

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

p331 v8 "Unity does not require uniformity; being of the same mind is not predicated on simple agreement with others. It is, however, founded on a common Lord, a common confession, and a common goal of witness to the world."

v8 sympathy is the opposite of self-absorption. "Compassionate" translates a word describing deep intense emotion. Humility springs in part from an awareness of our creatureliness and thus of our utter dependence on the Creator.

v9 p332 "The true test of character - and Christian faith - is how the believer responds when treated with contempt, since out of instinct humans tend to retaliate."

v9 see Rom 12:14 "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse"

p332 "The biblical understanding of authority is that all earthly forms of power inhere in and derive from a heavenly source."

#### Karen Jobes BEC

p215 v8 citing Elliott "In the highly competitive and stratified world of Greco-Roman antiquity, only those of degraded social status were 'humble', and humility was regarded as a sign of weakness and

shame, and inability to defend one's honour. Thus the high value placed on humility by Israelites and Christians is remarkable."

p217 v9 "...as the basis for the Christian's ethical model, Peter notably points not to Jesus' teaching but to his response to the undeserved suffering that led to the cross. Nevertheless, Peter's exhortation of non-retaliation can be compared to what Jesus teaches his disciples about how to treat enemies."

Jobes shows with charts (p221-222) how the whole letter of 1 Peter follows the main points of Ps 34.

p224 cites Piper "one cannot truly bless while inwardly desiring someone's hurt"

### Notes on 1 Peter 3:13-17

#### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p334 v13 "While it is possible to be passionate or misguided about the wrong things, being zealots of the good cannot be faulted". c.f. Titus 2:14 "zealous for good deeds" "Moral integrity, in the end, cannot be impugned."

Charles v14 p334 - Christians are "blessed" refers to Matt 5:10 "blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Jobes agrees p228)

"In taking up Christian discipleship, one learns that persecution is unavoidable, as Jesus states without ambiguity (Matt 10:34-39; John 15:18-22)"

v14-16 p335 "Christians must learn to supply a defence of the faith without being "defensive" in the way they present themselves"

v14-17 p336 perhaps the background is Peter's memory of his denial - he was not ready to give a response

#### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p227 v13 the opposition to Christianity was sporadic at this point - it was still "on trial" - not yet considered evil or illegal. All points to a pre-Nero dating

p228 v14 "[Peter] concedes that his readers may run up against those who do not like or agree with the Christian definition of what it means to live righteously. He later acknowledges in 4:3-4 that by abstaining from socially acceptable practices because they are not right, the Christian indicts a society that approvingly practises them."

v14 p228 "Blessing may encompass the joys and riches of life, but for Peter the privilege of living rightly because of Christ and suffering for it is nothing less than a blessing, a sign of God's favour and evidence of one's salvation."

p228 v14b is a quote from Isa 8:12 "do not be afraid of them or troubled"

p229 v15 “Most ‘testimonies’ when given at all, are given in a Christian gathering, using the jargon of the church, which makes perfect sense to the converted, but in terms that have little meaning for those who are not already believers. ... according to Peter, believers must be able to relate the Christian faith to unbelievers by addressing their questions in terms they find meaningful.”

p230 v16 “First, an effective testimony requires a clear conscience regarding one’s personal integrity before the Lord. One cannot explain the hope we have in Christ while living in ways that contradict that hope. Second, even the best-intentioned testimony must be conducted in an appropriate manner. If offense is to be taken, it should be over the content of the gospel message, not because the message was offered in a manner that invalidates Christ’s love for seekers. The Christian testimony must reflect humility and respect for the hearer.”

p232 cites Michaels paraphrasing v17 “If it should be God’s will that we suffer, it is better to suffer now, as doers of good at the hands of evil men, than on the day of visitation, when these same evil-doers shall receive their just punishment from the eternal Judge of all men”

p232 cites Elliott on whether God wills suffering – “the point is not that God wills suffering but that God wills doing what is right rather than doing what is wrong ... , even if and when this results in suffering.”

### Notes on 1 Peter 3:18-22

Peter’s OT hermeneutic is clearly to look for OT foreshadowings and predictions both of Jesus and of the church (God’s people). Hence the view that Christ preached through Noah in the time of Noah should be judged less likely on the basis of 1:11, not more.

Jobes’ point about *sarx/pneuma* vs *soma/psyche* is a strong one

Jobes’ idea that the v21 filth from the flesh is about baptism not morally transforming us is interesting, but most English translations seem to point the reader towards a conclusion about physical dirt and the physical body

v18 a clear teaching of substitution / vicarious atonement

### Karen Jobes BEC

p235 summarising 3:18-22 Christ has defeated and will destroy those who practice evil (just as in the days of Noah). Unjust suffering for doing good is living out your baptism pledge of a lifetime of devotion

p236 “this passage highlights the conquering power of his resurrection and ascension”

p237 “The exegetical questions basically come down to these: Where did Christ go? When did he go? To whom did he speak? What did he say?”

p237 there are two clear points: (1) it is linked with the preceding passage by “because also” so it is intended to ground the immediately preceding claim that it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. (2) Even though Christ suffered unjustly to death for doing good, that death was not the defeat it appeared to be but was instead a victory over all angels, authorities and powers.

p238 "It is better to suffer for doing good, as Christ did, because that is the way to follow Christ to victory"

p238 "The implication of the connection between 3:17 and 3:18 is that even if a Christian were to suffer to the point of unjust martyrdom for the sake of Christ, such suffering is both purposeful and victorious because death is not the final word. Christians follow in Christ's footsteps through death to victory."

p238 "The phrase *peri harmarton*, for sins, is used repeatedly throughout the LXX of the Pentateuch to refer to the sin offerings of the sacrificial system. Peter has come to understand Christ's suffering to death as a unique sin offering that provides access to God, making it possible to be born again into the living hope that Christ's resurrection to eternal life has accomplished.""

p238 "... Jesus did not die just an undeserved death. Jesus died a vicarious death on behalf of the righteous."

p239 3 views on when Christ preached:

1) Christ preached through Noah to Noah's generation (Augustine, Aquinas, Reformation, Grudem).  
Jobes answers this view on p240

2) It refers to Christ's three days in the grave (hell), based on a late version of the apostles creed.  
Jobes addresses this view on p241

3) "A third interpretation has emerged as the consensus view of modern interpreters: the flesh-spirit contrast is not between Christ's body and soul but between his two states of existence - in the realm of earthly human life before his death and in his glorified state of existence after the resurrection."

p241 The word pair *soma* (body) and *psyche* (soul) were the terms used in Greek vocabulary to distinguish between the material body and the immaterial soul, not *sarx* (flesh) and *pneuma* (spirit).

p241 Peter says that Jesus was made alive in the *spirit* - not referring to his soul because in what sense did it come alive?

p241 "Christ in his entirety was put to death at the crucifixion and in his entirety was made alive at the resurrection."

p241 Jobes is noncommittal on whether spirit should be capitalized

p242 "...it is more likely that the contrast refers to two aspects of the redemptive event: Christ's death and subsequent resurrection. This is corroborated by clear reference to his ascension in 3:22, which completes the redemptive sequence: crucifixion "put to death", resurrection "made alive" and ascension "gone into heaven"."

p242 citing Michaels "if 'flesh' is the sphere of human limitations, of suffering and death (cf 1 Pet 4:1), 'Spirit' is the sphere of power, vindication and a new life"

p243 v19-20 “it should be noted, however, that none of the titles used at that time to describe the place of the dead - Hades, Tartarus, Sheol - are found in this text. Furthermore, the place of dead people is not elsewhere in the NT referred to with the word ‘prison’”

p243 the answers of to whom Christ preached and how this fits with the Noah story are found in 1 Enoch, familiar to Peter's readers.

p244 according to tradition, before the flood, Enoch was taken by God and lived with the Watchers - fallen angels who slept with human women and had children. They ask Enoch to intercede for them and returns and proclaims God's message that they shall not ascend into heaven but remain imprisoned on earth for eternity. Their sons are called ‘spirits’ and were the cause of the great evil that resulted in the judgement of the flood. (Noah was Enoch's grandson)

p244 “If this is the assumed tradition behind 1 Pet 3:19 then the spirits to whom Christ preached should be understood as fallen angels and/or demonic spirits”. Their imprisonment represents in spatial terms God's restraining power over them, and the message Christ preached to them is the confirmation that “the day of the great conclusion”, first announced by the flood, is now upon them”

p244 “Peter is identifying Jesus Christ as the victor over all evil in both the spirit and the human worlds forevermore”

p246 “... the previous associations of Noah as a preacher of righteousness and repentance with the residents of Asia Minor are congenial to Peter's message of holy living written to an audience in the same geographical region. ... Both Enoch and his grandson, Noah, delivered a message of condemnation to those directly involved in the evil that provoked the flood. (c.f. Heb 11:7)”

p247 “[Peter] uses the flood as a type of God's catastrophic judgement, which happened only after God's restrained patience, and he poses the survival of Noah from that divine judgement as a type of Christian salvation, which involves the tamed waters of baptism. His point is that just as there were only a few saved from the flood, they were nevertheless and certainly saved. ... though the pagans of Noah's time spurned his warning to repent, God's patience did not imply God's indifference.”

p247 addresses why this interpretation was not common in church history - the loss of the book of Enoch. The *decensus* theory developed to answer the questions of how OT saints received salvation, what was Jesus doing during the three days, and could those not hearing the gospel be saved after death?

p252 v21 “The very water that threatened to kill Noah and his family was at the same time the means of their deliverance.”

p253

v20 “a few”	v21 “you”
v20 “were saved”	v21 “baptism now saves”
v20 “through water”	v21 “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”

p254 “these two qualifying clauses [through the resurrection ... and putting off the filth...] join the objective basis of salvation in Christ’s resurrection with the subjective basis in the believer’s experience.”

p254 “... the apostle is saying that baptism that saves does not remove moral filth from Christians is such a once-and-for-all way that Christians need not care about how they live after being baptised. ... This stands as a reminder to them that baptism is not a ‘ticket to heaven’ that exempts them from subsequent issues of morality. Rather (Gk *alla*), Christian baptism is a pledge to God of a good conscience - a pledge to live rightly ever after.”

p255 “Peter is reminding his readers that when they were baptised, a question was asked about their faith in Christ, to which they gave a positive response. ... Peter reminds them of that pledge as they face suffering because of Christ and the temptation to turn away.”

p256 v22 The form of 1 Pet 3:18-22 is similar to 1 Tim 3:16

p258 Jobes cites Grudem’s helpful list of parallels Peter makes between Noah and his readers

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p337 “The writer wishes to comfort his audience with the reassurance that (1) Christ is their “captain”, the one who went before them and also suffered, and (2) there is nothing in the cosmos that remains outside the conquest and reign of Christ.”

p338 “This suffering, moreover, was vicarious, for the sins of others; it was substitutionary atonement – “the righteous for the unrighteous” unique and once-for-all (*hapax*) in character”

p338 v19-22 Lists 7 arguments for seeing the imprisoned spirits as human souls, perhaps strongest being that Peter sees human, not demons as sources of opposition in the letter.

p339 rejects Christ preaching through Noah on three grounds, including his belief that the chiasmic structure mandates a “descent”

p339 also rejects though the arguments for the spirits as OT saints before Christ

p339 moves on to make the case for spirits as angelic beings, noting that the idea that the work of Christ touches the angelic world is not tangential to the epistle (see 1:12, 3:22, 5:8). Also notes potential parallel thought of imprisoned spirits in Rev 18,20; and parallel of disarming powers and authorities in Col 2:14-15 (also 1 Cor 15:24-27 and Phil 2:10).

p340 Notes that Christ is not “evangelising” but “preaching”

p340 Christ is the new Enoch, the Son of Man, the Messiah, the Righteous One

p341 “Baptism, therefore, “saves” insofar as it *declares* publicly Christ’s uncontested lordship. ... At baptism, the consequences of Christian discipleship are acknowledged, including a willingness to suffer.”

## Notes on 1 Peter 4:1-6

### J Darryl Charles REBC

p343 v1 "The notion that suffering purifies, perhaps offensive to the rationalist, materialist mind, is amply supported throughout both OT and NT" (e.g. Ps 94:12; Heb 12:6 - both on the Lord's discipline)

p343 v3-4 "the pagan lifestyle revolves around indulging one's appetites ... the Christian ethic, in notable contrast, is characterized by bridled passions, purity, and a good conscience."

p343 v4 "they heap abuse" means they are expressing outrage and resentment. "Part of the experience of normative Christian suffering is to be vilified for not participating in the hedonistic lifestyle of pagan culture; not to participate is to provoke resentment".

p344 v5 note that God judging the living and the dead is same phrase Peter uses to Cornelius in Acts 10:42

p344 v6 this time, unlike in 3:19, *euangelizomai* is used - preaching the gospel - hence we are back to the human rather than angelic sphere

p344 v6 "Theologically speaking, the teaching of the NT is that judgement is predicated on the gospel, not vice versa - i.e. people will be judged according to how they responded to the gospel, the "good news" of Christ.

p344 v6 "Peter wishes to affirm that *all* the righteous - those alive and those deceased - will be vindicated"

p345 v6 "a fourth view is to be preferred: v6 refers to converts to Christ who have died since hearing and embracing the gospel. Indeed, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians presents strong evidence that the question of those who die before Christ's return was a quandary for the early church."

p345 v6 "Paul's teaching is simply this: whereas all humans are destined to taste death and face judgement, those who are found righteous will be vindicated for their faithfulness."

### Karen Jobes BEC

p262 v1-2 "Pagans of the first century viewed Christians as killjoys who lived gloomy lives devoid of pleasure. The pleasures from which Christians of the first century typically abstained were the popular forms of Roman entertainment: the theatre with its risqué performances, the chariot races, and the gladiatorial fights with their blood and gore."

p262 "Although Peter's readers may have been condemned by merely human opinion ... they nevertheless live according to God's judgement."

p263-264 Jobes presents various arguments against taking Christ to be the "one who suffers" in v1

p264 "... the thought that physical suffering is necessarily a purifying experience or that suffering presents less opportunity for the sufferer to sin is highly questionable."

p265 Jobs argues that Peter uses flesh (*sarx*) differently to Paul. For Paul it is the fallen human nature / old nature - you can't live in the Spirit and in the flesh. For Peter, it is merely the "earthly life"

p265 "... those who suffer unjustly because of their faith in Christ have demonstrated that they are willing to be through, or done, with sin by choosing obedience, even if it means suffering."

p265 "Peter's readers face the choice of either taking the path of least resistance - going with the values, norms, and practices acceptable and expected by their society - or being obedient to God and suffering the consequences of criticism and condemnation by unbelieving family and friends. Their willingness to suffer this way therefore demonstrates that they have resolved to be through with sin."

p265 Heb 5:8 Jesus learned obedience through suffering

p266 "In order to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, to embrace their calling, and to face daily a society unfriendly to their values, Christians must be armed with the same disposition and resolve that allowed Jesus to set his face resolutely toward the cross."

p267 v3 "Acts of abandon means any behaviour lacking moral constraint, particularly sexual acts but also acts of violence." "All five terms refer to practices that have in common a lack of self-control, a character flaw leading to behaviours that are a self-destructive violation of God's standards and are harmful to others."

p267 "In our pluralistic age of globalization, issues of multicultural pluralism are creating an ethos similar to that of the polytheism Peter faced: everything spiritual seems acceptable except the exclusive claims of the gospel of Jesus Christ."

p267 "In this letter Peter writes to Christian readers *as if they were* Jews who are now scattered among the nations (Gentiles)" ... "Peter wants his readers to think of themselves as God's true covenant people without distinction"

p269 "So Peter teaches that Christians are to remain within the social structures of their society (2:11-3:7) yet not participate in institutionalized practices that are recognized as contrary to God's will."

p269 - notes that many of these practices would be found in family religious celebrations, official meetings of trade guilds and civic holidays - thus making it very awkward for Christians refusing to participate

p270 v6 "In the immediate context, Peter's point is that death does not exempt a person from God's coming judgement. Accountability after death was not widely taught in the pagan world. With such an assumption, a pagan critic could reasonably question what good the gospel is, since it seems so

restrictive of behaviour in this life, and then the believer dies like everyone else." ... "Death does not invalidate either the promises or the warnings of the gospel of Jesus Christ"

p272 Jobes sees "living and dead" in v5 as a merism - all people. The "dead" in both verses should have the same referent. Hence the verse is about those who are dead who have heard the gospel (but not necessarily responded)

p273 Jobes sees v6 as meaning something like - when people die, what matters not is how they were judged by people in their earthly life (flesh), but how in their after death life (spirit) they are judged by God.

p273 summarising v1-6 "Just as foreigners characteristically do not fully participate in the culture and customs of their host land, Christians may find themselves at odds with the values and practices of the society in which they reside. Although Peter gives an apt reminder for all believers, this passage is an especially relevant encouragement for new Christians who may be taken by surprise at the intensity of the negative reaction their faith provokes from unbelieving friends. When peer pressure comes into play, the church's role as an alternate society, a Christian colony in a strange land, provides a social context in which Christians should seek and find the support and kinship they once found through engaging in practices contrary to the will of God."

### Notes on 1 Peter 4:7-11

v8 - a willingness to be inconvenienced is needed if we are to fulfil the command to love

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

p345 the pervasive belief in the early church that the end of all things was imminent (Jn 9:4, Rom 13:11-12, Php 4:5, Heb 10:25; Jas 5:8; 1Jn 2:18; Rev 22:20)

p345 "in 1 Peter, eschatology motivates ethics"

p346 v7 "To think in a sober and self-controller manner is to adopt precisely the opposite mind-set that characterizes surrounding society, i.e. irrationality and frivolity."

p346 v8 "...proper thinking will lead to proper action, and a distinctly Christian social ethic is the embodiment of love."

p346 v8 is a partial citation of Proverbs 10:12 similar to James 5:20 - "love covers over a multitude of sins", rather than magnifying the faults of others.

p347 v9 "ultimately hospitality might be thought of as the best bridge between believer and unbeliever."

p348 "The other extreme [opposite to isolation from society], toward which the contemporary church is perhaps more inclined as we navigate the twenty-first century, altogether relaxes the tension between faith and culture. The result is a capitulation to and absorption into culture, so that the church loses any prophetic presence in its social location; of this danger Peter is fully aware.

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p274 "Throughout the NT, as here, teaching about the future is offered as the basis for how Christians are to live now. What one believes about the future shapes how one lives today."

p275 Jobes does not see "the end" as referring directly to the second coming, but to the reality that we are living in the final stage of the redemptive process.

p276 "The last of times" (1 Pet 1:20) indicates the final stage in God's redemptive plan.

p276 "The NT writers may or may not have been surprised that two thousand years would pass without the return of the Lord, but that is somewhat beside the point of what Peter is saying. We, too, are living in the last stage of God's redemptive process; it is no more or less true that "the end is near" today than it was when Peter first said it."

p276 the right thinking and clear-mindedness are to result in prayer - the preposition *eis* indicates purpose

p278 v8 "... the love that covers sins is probably best understood as a forbearance that does not let wrongs done within the Christian community come to their fullest and most virulent expression."

p280 hospitality requires open-heartedness towards other believers

p281 speaking and serving represent all our activities (c.f. Col 3:17 - whatever you do, whether in word or deed ...)

### **Notes 1 Peter 4:12-19**

v18 is quote from Prov 11:31 (LXX)

v14 perhaps some Christians felt they were being punished for their misdemeanours more severely because of their faith, but it is no credit to be punished harshly as a "Christian thief" or "Christian meddler", as though this were some kind of noble endurance of persecution.

v17 often interpreted to mean that God actually is more lenient on unbelievers in this life, calling his church to account for their sin, before judging society for godlessness. Possibly true, but doesn't fit too well with the flow of the argument here.

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p348 "The promise of judgement serves as a promise of vindication. Knowing that God the Judge is the "great leveller" should encourage the saints who suffer so that in the end they can entrust themselves to God."

p350 v14 "the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you" draws on language from Exodus where the glory of the Lord came down.

p350 v14 "Peter would seem to be suggesting that the presence of God is particularly notable in those times where the saints are being persecuted."

p351 v19 "Christians should be known for what they do, not for what they suffer. Fixation upon the difficulties of life robs the believer of the opportunity to display his concern for the welfare of others."

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p286 v12 "Misfortune and death are certainly "normal" in the sense that they are universally experienced, but they are not normal when viewed from God's intention in creation and his plan in redemption. The idea that normal life should always be harmonious and free from suffering, despite universal suffering and death, remains a lingering echo of life in Eden as God created it before the fall. It is also a longing for the time when there will be no more tears, suffering, pain and death (Rev 21:4). From either the prefall or the eschatological perspective, suffering and death are abnormal. But Peter's letter is pastoral, addressing the needs of people who live in this world, where evil, sin, and suffering are pressing realities of life."

p286 v12 "Because evil and sin targeted the perfect human being, Jesus Christ, those who follow in his footsteps should not be surprised to find themselves also targets of the forces of evil and sin that came against Jesus."

p286 v12 c.f. Luke 6:26 - woe to you when everyone speaks well of you

p286 v13 "Society may judge the gospel to be irrelevant or even evil, but it is God's judgement that will ultimately stand."

p286 v13 "The blessing comes not because of an opportunity for self-improvement but because of the presence of God."

p288 v14 "the Spirit of glory and of God" is a ref to Isa 11:2 LXX (sevenfold spirit)

p290 v17 though the NT is clear there is no condemnation for Christians, the concept of judgement for Christians is amply attested (e.g. Rom 14:10)

p293 v17 "Those who profess Christ are the first ones to be tested in God's judging action, and it occurs during their lives and throughout history."

p294 v18 "The thought is that the world's response makes it difficult for Christians to remain faithful to Christ to the end"

p295 v19 it is harder to trust God when we are suffering, as we question what he is doing

p296 v19 "Do not let persecution and suffering deflect you from your calling in Christ, because they are a part of this calling."

### **Notes 1 Peter 5:1-4**

#### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p352 v1 "The reality of Christ's reign is "already and not yet" - a present reality, though not fully consummated."

p352 v2-3 lists many examples of the Shepherd / Sheep imagery for God and his people found in the OT. Also sees Jesus' commission to Peter in Jn 21 "feed my lambs" as background

p353 "The exercise of authority, given the human predicament, tends to be coercive, self-centered, and domineering. Jesus' warning to the disciples at a crucial point in his ministry is poignant: "not so with you" (Mk 10:43). Rather, Jesus' prescription is that the true leader "must be your servant".

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p300 v1 perhaps Peter turns to elders now because of the thought that judgement begins with the house of God, and the leaders are judged first

p301 v1 Jobes does not see witness as meaning "eyewitness" but referring to the fact that Peter too is a witness for Christ as a church leader in the face of suffering

p302 eldership probably not yet a formal office yet, but simply those older men looked up to by the community

p303 v2 presents "clear evidence that in the earlier stages of the church, not distinction between *presbyteroi* (elders) and *episkopoi* (overseers) was intended."

p304 Jobes also sees Jn 21:15-19 as background to the shepherd metaphor

p304 v2-4 are three sets of opposing characteristics not like this...but like that

p304 "not grudgingly" perhaps refers to the fact that people might be reluctant to accept the office of elder given social context of hostility towards Christians

p305 v2 "the practice of financially compensating church leadership in some form apparently arose early in the church (e.g. 1 Cor 9:7; Gal 6:6), but abuse of the privilege also arose with it (1 Tim 3:3, 6:5; Titus 1:11; 2 Pet 2:3; Jude 11).

### **Notes on 1 Peter 5:5-7**

v5 quotes Prov 3:34

### **J Darryl Charles REBC**

p354 v5b "The admonition to 'clothe yourselves with humility' is vivid, for it calls to mind the servant putting on an apron, such as Jesus, in fact, did as an example to the disciples (Jn 13:4-5,14-15)"

p354 v7 language similar to Ps 55:22 "Cast our cares on the Lord and he will sustain you"

### **Karen Jobes BEC**

p307 v5 The term *neoteroi* (younger) refers to those who are not elders i.e. all other church members

p309 v5b "True humility, as opposed to a contrived, self-degrading humiliation, flows from recognizing one's complete dependence on God, and is expressed by the acceptance of one's role

and position in God's economy. With such humility one is freed from attempts to gain more power or prestige."

p312 v6 "The point is not that Christians have a choice of whether they humble themselves; that happens to them simply because they are Christians. The point is how Christians respond when, because of their faith, their social status has suffered and their situation has become difficult."

### Notes on 1 Peter 5:8-11

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

p355 v8 often in the OT persecutors are likened to lions waiting to attack and devour

#### Karen Jobes BEC

p315 v9 "Resistance to some degree is to be expected wherever a Christian community takes seriously its commitment to God, because the Christian church is the emergence of God's victory over the powers of darkness."

p316 v10 "Peter is more likely saying here that in the light of the eternal glory, which believers have in Christ, a lifetime in this body is but a little while"

p317 v11 to him be dominion forever (i.e. not the Roman empire)

### Notes on 1 Peter 5:12-14

#### J Darryl Charles REBC

p278 there is good reason to believe Silas was involved in writing the letter for Paul

p358 v13 Babylon probably refers to Rome but encourages all Christians as exiles

#### Karen Jobes BEC

p320 "Peter's explicit reference to Silvanus as the one "through" whom he wrote more likely describes the role of a courier than of an amanuensis"

p323 v14 "Most likely 'Babylon' forms an inclusio with 'Diaspora' in the opening verse and thus functions 'to identify both the author and his Christian community as sharing with the readers such exile status'. Hence Babylon need not refer to any physical location in particular