

Introduction

1. The Author: Simon Peter

The history we have of the life of Peter is among the most extensive of any bible character in the New Testament, with the exception of Paul. As a matter of fact, their work Peter and are important to all Christians. Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter, giving to him the opportunity to open the door for the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts 2 and for the Gentiles in Caesarea in Acts 10-11. At the same time, Jesus gave to Paul to mission of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles to such a degree, that Paul notes in Galatians that Peter was the apostle to the circumcision, and Paul was the apostle to the uncircumcision).

*But on the contrary, when **they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. Gal. 2:7-10***

These men were set forth by God as being worthy to be added to the great cloud of witnesses described in Hebrews who will help us “run with patience the race set before us.

*Therefore we also, since we are **surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb. 12:1-2***

They are great examples, because God has revealed to us the early lives of both of these men and their growth and development as Christians. While Paul came in much later and described himself as the chief of sinners, Peter’s life as an early disciple also reflected great weakness and instability. They both reveal the grace and mercy of God and His Son Jesus Christ.

The benefits of Peter life is different in one respect. After Jesus’ initial assessment of Peter, in which he changed his name from Simon to Peter or Cephas, throughout the remainder of Jesus ministry right up until His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Simon continued to fall far short of the name Peter that Jesus had given to him.

*One of the **two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. 42 Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, Peter). Jn. 1:42***

This is important and comforting because many Christians do not measure up to the expectations we have of ourselves based on what the Lord made us by grace, but that we have to work for to become a reality.

When Andrew brought Simon to Jesus and He said said, “*You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is translated Peter),”* (Jn. 1:42), what did Jesus see in Peter’s character for him to give him the nickname of “*rock solid*” or “*solid as a rock?*” Judging from the remainder of his life, Jesus saw in Peter a strength of character and stability. Peter would become a solid and immovable disciple. Yet Peter’s battles and burdens as a disciple of Christ in his earlier days were far more difficult than anything Simon had previously confronted.

While Peter first Jesus at the Jordan River, Jesus was now in Galilee near the Sea of Galilee and we are now introduced to Simon as a fishermen with his brother Andrew and his partners, James and John.

And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 They immediately left their nets and followed Him. 19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his

brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. 20 And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him. Mk 1:16-20

In a clearly different account, whether earlier or later than this event, Jesus came a second time and in this case, the same Sea of Galilee is also called the Lake of Gennesaret. This time Jesus first has Peter row him out a little way from shore where He can teach all the people. After finishing, he performs a powerful miracle and sign by causing Peter and his partners to catch such a large number of fish that the boats nearly sank.

*So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 **Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."** 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. **From now on you will catch men."** 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him. Luke 5:1-12*

At the end of this event, Simon Peter, recognizing his own unworthiness, falls down at Jesus feet and confesses he is not up to being a disciple of such a great servant of God, but Jesus encourages him that he will indeed become a "fisher of men."

It is evident from this account that though Jesus had changed his name, Simon still recognized how unworthy he was in heart and life to merit that great word, Peter. The change from Simon to Peter would become a long and arduous journey of successes and failures.

Sinking in the Sea

There are many events in the life of Simon Peter that we will pass over at this time and just consider the arduous nature of this journey. The first account of his attempt to be the rock that ended in failure was after the feeding of the 5000. After sending the disciples ahead in the boat, Jesus remained behind to pray on the mountain. The fourth watch of the night would begin sometime around 3:00 and end at sunrise. It was during this time that Jesus walked up to the boat in the midst of the sea, striking fear into the hearts of all. Peter, seeing the Lord on the water wants to go out to him and walk on the water himself. Jesus bids him come, but in a moment of weakness, Peter began to sink

*Now **in the fourth watch of the night** Jesus went to them, **walking on the sea.** 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And **Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."** 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" Mt. 14:25-30*

Never had he faced such a challenge! His initial courage was admirable, but it was beyond his ability at that time in his growth. Jesus immediately saved him, but then gave him a stinging rebuke about his lack of faith.

*And **immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"** 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." Mt. 14:31-33*

Did Jesus (and Peter), wish he had never tried as he felt the bitter sting of failure? He did not shine as a stable rock here. Yet, he still did more than all the others. He had enough faith to try. Often God would prefer that we push ourselves into the territory where failure may happen, but it is often the only way of growth for the Christian.

The Good Confession

Later, Peter boldly made the good confession. *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Jesus reaffirmed his name as Peter and promised to give him the keys to open the door to the kingdom and inspiration to bind and loose God's will (Mt. 16:16-19). He must have felt great joy at this praise and affirmation.

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Mt. 16:15-19

Yet in the next moment, as Jesus revealed He would be the *"Christ crucified,"* Peter *"took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You"* How did Peter feel when Jesus said, *"Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men"* (Mt. 16:22-23). A lesser more unstable man might have followed those disciples who *"went back and walked with Him no more"* (Jn. 6:66). But Peter didn't. He did not shrink back or allow any setback to deter him. Once again he had revealed instability, but even in his instability he was stable. He would not move from Jesus side!

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Mt. 16:21-23

Yet even in that act of instability, he manifested his faith, love and devotion to Jesus. Would it have been better not to rebuke Jesus, his Lord? Of course it would, but though he was terribly mistaken in the manner in which he showed his concern, at least he had the courage and devotion to express himself. Though it was in the wrong way, at least he was able to learn that the motives behind it were good, but the manner and direction in which they were expressed were wrong to the point of evil.

The Denial at the Trial

Peter's lowest point came during the trial of Jesus before the Jews. One stands in awe of the great compassion of Jesus when He warned them all: *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night."* Peter thought he could live up to his name, but had no idea what he was committing to: *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."* Jesus did not become angry or chide him. He simply stated the fact: *"before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* Peter still felt that with his character and inner strength this could never happen. *"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You"* (Mt. 26:31-35). Lest we single Peter out here, all the other disciples said the same thing.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee." 33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." 34 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said

all the disciples. Mt. 26:31-35

Luke added one more detail to this account that renders it even more powerful. Satan is seeking to sift Simon like wheat. Yet Jesus has prayed and then seeks to comfort Peter with the words "when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren." What terrible and solemn, yet comforting words. Yet even still, Peter's overconfidence is the foundation of his fall.

*And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, **Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.**" 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." 34 Then He said, "**I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.**" Lk. 22:31-34*

Peter simply did not fully understand the darkness of the hour and the fear and trembling he would have to endure. First, he ran away with all the rest. What anguish he must have felt. But it got worse as he evidently sought to redeem himself from this first lapse. In the midst of unbelievers, he denied his knowledge of Jesus first by affirmation and later with curses and oaths. What a jolt of shame and remorse when he saw his inner character was not enough.

*Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee." 70 **But he denied it before them all**, saying, "I do not know what you are saying." 71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 **But again he denied with an oath**, "I do not know the Man!" 73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you." 74 **Then he began to curse and swear**, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 **And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."** **So he went out and wept bitterly.** Mt. 26:69-75*

What agony as "the rooster crowed and the Lord turned and looked." How little he deserved the name, Peter. It was after the rooster crowed and Jesus looked at him that Peter, realizing what he had done, "Peter went out and wept bitterly" (Lk. 22:60-62).

***Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.** 61 **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.** **Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."** 62 **So Peter went out and wept bitterly.** Lk. 22:60-62*

Jesus demanded a Public Confession

Although Peter did in fact come to himself and work to establish his brethren, Jesus was not through with his need to repent. He had publically denied Jesus in the presence of all His enemies. Now in the presence of Jesus and the other disciples, Jesus reminded Peter of his words to Him before His crucifixion. First, using *agape*, Jesus asked if he loved Him more than these? Some have questioned whether the these here are the fish and returning to fishing, but the much more poignant and powerful reminder of his own words, even if everyone else falls, I will never deny you. Jesus brings these words back to Peter's mind. Peter used the word *phileo*, instead of *agape*. Did this mean Peter no longer felt that he was worthy to use the word *agape*, or did he still cling to the foolish notion that *phileo* was the higher love? We will never know. But when on the third time Jesus also used the word *phileo*, Peter's grief intensified and he expressed his faith in Jesus omniscience.

*This is now **the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples** after He was raised from the dead. 15 **So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"** He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep." Jn. 21:14-17*

Peter's Burden

Jesus then revealed to Peter, the violent nature of the death he would endure. This clearly would become a burden he would carry his entire life and every time there was a violent encounter with persecutors he would have to wonder if this was to be his final day. After his arrest along with John, the arrest and beating with the 12, the arrest with James by Herod, each time, Peter had an additional burden to bear.

Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me." Jn. 21:14-19

A burden he was still carrying when he wrote his final letter.

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 2Pet. 1:12-15

How does a man get past such memories?

Peter had tried to live up to the name Jesus gave but fell woefully short, again and again while Jesus walked the earth. A lesser man would have given up. But Peter held fast through it all and when the day of Pentecost came, Peter stood with the eleven and his rock like character truly shone. He would not bend or break even by failure. Though he did not live up to the pressure of following Jesus, he forced himself to do his best and never gave up.

The path from the man he was (Simon) to the "Peter" Jesus said he would become was far more difficult than Peter imagined. Yet even in failure he justified his name. He did exactly as Paul who also had shameful memories: "*forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 3:13-14). Even before that denial, Jesus had already told Peter to forget what lay behind and reach forward to what was ahead: "*when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers*" (Lk. 22:32).

All of this was summed up in a prophecy that Isaiah made revealing the power and the mercy of the coming King of Israel. There are two terms I believe it is important for us to become familiar with: a bruised reed; a smoking flax.

A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. Isa 42:3

A bruised Reed

Jacob, Judah, Moses and David all carried a staff. Some were made of reed, chosen because it was strong and lightweight. In the same family as bamboo, it is hollow and if one side is splintered (bruised), it becomes unstable. Such a staff would be very dangerous to lean upon as Israel found leaning on Egypt. "*Look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him*" (Isa. 36:6). "*They have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of you with the hand, you broke and tore all their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and made all their backs quiver*" (Ezek. 29:6-7).

A bruised reed was an unreliable staff that could snap at a crucial moment causing the one leaning upon it to be badly hurt. Clearly the best thing to do with a bruised reed is break it in half and throw it away. Many who come to Jesus are "*bruised reeds*." At an important moment any of us can snap as Peter did at the trial. Yet Jesus knew we would be *bruised reeds*. Bruised long before he called us (Eph 2:1-8) and liable to snap at a crucial moment. Next time we feel the stinging shame of failing Jesus, we can quote this verse: A bruised reed he will not break.

A Smoking Flax

In Israel, the source of light in the darkness was the lamp. It held oil and used a wick to burn brightly. The wick, made of flax, was placed in the lamp and raised or lowered for optimum light. In the parable of the ten virgins, the wise not only took extra oil, but when the bridegroom came "*all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps*" (Mt. 25:7). They brought trimmers because as the wick burned, its upper portion became charred and the light dimmed. Once charred, when raised to give more light, it would smolder and smoke. Even the golden lampstand had "*wick-trimmers*" (Num. 4:9). A "*smoking flax*" was an idiom for an untrimmed lamp casting a dim light and irritating the eyes and nose with smoke. The best thing to do with such a lamp is put it out(*quench*).

Who are the "*smoking flaxes*?" Once again Isaiah speaks of those who serve the Messiah. Ideally, "*If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light*" and "*you shine as lights in the world*" (Lk. 11:36; Phil. 2:15-16). When we are zealous and holy the light does indeed shine brightly, but dims and smokes when discouraged.

What a Savior! He is meek and lowly in heart and in him we find rest for our souls. Isaiah did not justify sloth or unfaithfulness. He gave hope to the weak, the immature, and even those who stumble in maturity. After a lifetime of hard work removing character flaws we are still *bruised as flax* we still *smoke*. But as a bruised reed he will not snap us and if our light should become as a smoking flax he will not quench us.

While many might have given up hope on Peter, as a smoking flax or bruised reed, but the Lord knew better and when Pentecost came, Peter was the rock Jesus knew he could be. He was not perfect, all his flaws had not vanished, but he was able to stand firm and do what he knew was right. He trusted the Lord, was willing to do everything the Lord asked him to do, and submitted without question. Even after this, Peter's life was not problem free. Though he was the apostle to open the door to Jew and Gentile, and stood firm while doing so(Mt 16:18-19; Acts 2:14-41:10; 15:7;) he later acted the part of a hypocrite. (Gal 2:11-15). Yet even after this, he went on to write the letters that bear his name in which it is revealed that he had then become an elder in the Lord's church(1 Pet 5:1-4). Those who willingly follow Peter in these things will find great things happening in their lives also.

Peter's subsequent history is recorded in Acts 1-12, before Luke shifted to Paul. In those chapters we read of his courage and hard work in the Lord's cause. His initial sermons were recorded by Luke (Acts 2-4, 10). His work in the early church is an example to all Christians. Yet after the Fifteenth chapter we lose sight of him. We learn that he did leave Jerusalem and come to Antioch, where Paul had to rebuke him. This event had to occur either before the Jerusalem conference, (Acts 15), when Paul and Barnabas were working with the church for several years, or soon after, because Paul was only with Barnabas for those first few years.

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" Gal 2:11-15

Yet when Paul came to Jerusalem to bring the money collected by the Gentile churches, Peter was not present, in fact, he is not mentioned again in the book of Acts.

These two letters that bear his name, are the only other things we know about Peter from the time of his leaving Jerusalem and the time of his death. Yet, even in these we only learn a few things about his life. First, he is now an elder. So he has had children, raised them well, is still

married to his one wife that Paul described also.

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? 1Cor. 9:5-6

His words in the final chapter words are powerful and important for us all:

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 2Pet. 3:1-3

His last words are also a word of warning. Although Paul's writings are Scripture, some of his words are hard to be understood. Sadly yet alarmingly there will be many who will twist these and other words to their own destruction, just as they do other Scriptures.

and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation — as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. 2Pet. 3:15-16

But we, now that we have been warned will take heed and watch for them.

You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2Pet. 3:17-18

His Purpose in Writing

The key words that summarize Peter's first letter are hope and endurance. The epistle was written to exhort them and motivate them in order to help them be willing to endure the persecution that was coming. The book is a wonderful mixture of the privilege and honor of being a Christian, along with the duty and responsibilities these great blessings bring with them. He also speaks extensively about our hope that will keep us fixed and steadfast even under persecution. He also spoke of joy in the midst of sorrow, and of the practical responsibilities for them to shoulder. The book centers on general exhortations. I Pet 5:12 seems to sum up the book best of all.

By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 1 Pet 5:12

Date and Place:

With all the traditions and proclamations of Peter being the first pope and in seeking to put in him Rome has led to some disagreement as to where he was.

From the words in the letter, there is no question that a severe persecution is coming upon the church. Although the Jews persecuted the churches to a limited degree, Rome did not begin to involve itself until about 63-64. Peter's epistle speaks of persecution as the normal lot of Christians which seems to place the date around 65-66 AD, which would coincide with Paul's writings to Timothy and Titus and the second letter to Timothy and his subsequent death. Whether that death had already occurred, we have no means of knowing as nothing is mentioned in either letter.

Three clues are given as the possible place of writing. First, where the letter was sent. It certainly appears that he has some personal knowledge of their circumstances.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1Pet. 1:1

These provinces take in some of the area of Paul's second and third missionary journeys. Peter had some knowledge of these congregations. How much from personal knowledge and how

much from other sources cannot now be determined.

Second are those who saluted or greeted at the end of the letter.

She who is in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you; and so does Mark my son. 1Pet. 5:13

Again, there is not enough to go on here to make a certain conclusion. It is evident that the church and one of Peter's sons sends salutations to the churches written to in the letter, again, whether from personal knowledge or general love is impossible to determine. The basic question about the term "Babylon" is whether it is figurative or literal? If figurative, the conclusion is drawn that Peter must have been in Rome. But if Peter was in Rome he would have stood with Paul. There is no way he would have left Paul alone. There was a literal Babylon during the days of Peter, there is no compelling reason that it was not from there. All in all, there is not enough information to know where Peter was when he wrote the letter. In this case, curiosity may never be satisfied.

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

As in nearly all the NT epistles the author and his authority to write such a letter are established at the very beginning. This phrase demands attentive ears and respectful obedience from all the disciples of Christ. The term apostle is used of those selected by a superior to take their authority to others.

"apostolos, ... 1. a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders... 2. Specially applied to the twelve disciples whom Christ selected, out of the multitudes of his adherents to be his constant companions and the heralds to proclaim to men the kingdom of God... 3. In a broader sense the name is transferred to other eminent Christian teachers." (Thayer, p. 68; 652).

An apostle was *"one sent forth with orders,"* commissioned and sent forth by Jesus to bind and loose upon His disciples what God desired. Many Scriptures clearly present that this inhered within the apostleship.

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Mt. 28:18-20

"Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Mt. 18:18

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. 16 "For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15-16

Even on the limited commission this was so.

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. Mt 10:40

"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me." Lk. 10:16

Because this epistle was written by an apostle, it demands careful consideration by all Jesus disciples. These are the words that He has spoken to them. The epistles are the fulfillment of Jesus promise to them.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. John 14:26

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn 16:12-13

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a

perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; Eph. 4:11-14

The writings in this epistle are a combination of the things the Holy Spirit taught them and the things Jesus had taught them that were brought back to their remembrance, for the purpose of giving us access to all truth, and allowing us to observe all the things that Jesus commanded them. These are precious letters containing all that can now be learned about what the Lord expects of us.

As Paul told those in Corinth, when an apostle writes a letter, the words are the commands of the Lord.

Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? 37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 1 Cor 14:36-38

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion

We see a similar word in James. The scattering and dispersion that Peter is describing initially occurred with Assyria and Babylon. The idea behind this term was first used by God to describe what He was going to do to the Jews if they rebelled against Him. The initial prophecy stated that God would scatter them from one end of the earth to the other.

"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known-- wood and stone. Deut 28:64

An additional prophecy, also given in Deuteronomy, revealed that God would bring back those who were scattered. There were actually two gatherings. The first occurred when Cyrus brought Israel back to their land. It is probable that this passage described the first gathering and Isaiah later gave the prophesy about the second gathering.

"Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, 2 "and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 "that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 "If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 "Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live." Deut 30:1-6

It was the role of the apostles and prophets along with all Christians to help fulfill the prophesy in Isaiah regarding a second gathering that would happen in the day that the root of Jesse (Jesus) became the banner of all people, including the Gentiles.

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. Isa. 11:10-12

Since these are Gentile churches, this is clearly not speaking of Israel alone, but all those who were "not my people who now are my people."

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For

out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. Isa 2:2-3

All the nations been "dispersed," since the tower of Babel, and Israel and Judah since the time of their captivity in Assyria (722) and Babylon (596) though now gathered together again in a spiritual sense, are still dispersed physically.

"diaspora... a scattering, dispersion... in the Sept. used of the Israelites dispersed among foreign nations... esp of their Babylonian exile... Transferred to Christians [i.e. Jewish Christians(?)] scattered abroad among the Gentiles... James 1:1 sojourners far from home, in Pontus... I Pet 1:1..." (Thayer, p. 141; 1290)

When Peter also adds the term pilgrim, a second aspect of this scattering is revealed. Those who live in a foreign country, forced to reside by the side of the natives, never assimilate into their culture.

parepidemos... one who comes from a foreign country into a city or land to reside there by the side of the natives; hence stranger; sojourning in a strange place, a foreigner,... in the N. T. Metaph in ref. to heaven as the native country, one who sojourns on earth: so of Christians, I Pet. 1:1;..." (Thayer p. 488; 3927)

parepidemos an adjective signifying "sojourning in a strange place, away from one's own people" (*para*, "from," expressing a contrary condition, and *epidemeo*, "to sojourn"; *demos*, "a people"), is used of OT saints, Heb 11:13, "pilgrims" (coupled with *xenos*, "a foreigner"); of Christians, 1 Peter 1:1, "sojourners (of the Dispersion)," RV; 2:11, "pilgrims" (coupled with *paroikos*, "an alien, sojourner"); the word is thus used metaphorically of those to whom Heaven is their own country, and who are sojourners on earth. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3927),

They continue to be a stranger and hold to their different ways. This is an excellent term to capture the true feelings of a Christian who must live in this world. We cannot fashion ourselves according to those in this world (Rom 12:2) and we cannot love the things of this world (1Jn. 2:15-17). *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:1-2*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. 1Jn. 2:15-17

As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty." 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Cor 6:16-7:1

This term is used three times in the Bible.

Twice in Peter and once in Hebrews.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were

assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and **pilgrims** on the earth. Heb. 11:13

Beloved, I beg you as **sojourners** and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, 1 Peter 2:11-12

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the **pilgrims** of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1 Peter 1:1-2

It refers to the common attitude on the part of Christians that they have been called out of darkness into the marvelous light of God's word (1Pet. 2:9-10). As such we are no longer citizens in this world for our citizenship is now in heaven.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:20

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Col. 3:2

All of this is captured by Peter's term pilgrim. All Christians much see themselves in this light for this is the type of people the letter is written to. The second term is "sojourner:"

This term captures this restoration of the Jews to Him. It also brings the Gentiles, for once they are scattered and become the "not my people," both Jew and Gentile will be called back as "my people" on the same footing (Hos 1:9-10; 2:23; 1Pet 2:9-10). Some want to limit this only to the Jews, but with the strong Gentile element in the epistle (1Pet 1:14; 2:10; 4:3), it seems better, especially in light of God's prophecy in Isaiah to conclude that all Christians are sojourners and still dispersed out in the world.

Strangers & Exiles

Introduction: Throughout all eternity, God has lived His life in heaven. Every decision and action He makes is based on righteousness, justice and love (Ps, 89:14; 1Jn. 4:8). All of His actions and thoughts in regard to others are based on His love which seeks to act in their best interests. There is no selfishness in Him and in all His plans or goals He is always seeking what is best for others. This is also how the Word, the Spirit, the angels and archangels are all living, and in every interaction we have had with them, this is how they have treated us. There is no injustice or unfairness in God.

When God created our parents, Adam and Eve, He created them and all future generations in His image and likeness. He planned for all mankind to live here on earth with the same type of loving and righteous life on earth as He and all others do in heaven. Alas, it only lasted a very short time. The purpose for the command regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to give them the opportunity to prove their own righteousness, unselfishness and love. Yet Eve acted out of selfishness when she ate that fruit. She knew God had told her not to do it and had warned her of the danger, but her own selfish desires took precedence over God's needs and she acted in a way that harmed Him and all of us. Adam followed right after her.

Her first two sons were Cain and Abel. While Abel clearly wanted to worship God in righteousness and love as it is done in heaven, Cain did not care what God wanted in worship and was only acting for his own interests. God could not accept such worship since it was not sincere and not out of love for God. When God asked Cain to repent and do it better the second time, Cain grew angry. In great selfishness he took Abel's life from him and then "*went out from the presence of the Lord*" to live the gift of life God had given him according to his own selfish desires. God summed up how this worked out in Genesis 6. The world darkened and became progressively worse, under this cloud of evil and selfishness: "*Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.*" "*The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence,*" "*for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.*" (Gen. 6:5-11).

This was a pivotal moment in the history of the world. God's grief and sorrow led to regret. With God's omniscient foresight, it is difficult to understand this as God did not know it was coming, but to witness so many selfish people mistreating and abusing each other in such evil ways was a terrible contrast to the life God and those who were with Him were living in heaven.

Yet God had made a promise to Adam and Eve and He intended to keep it. So God manifested His true feelings toward such conduct in the flood. *"So the Lord said, 'I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.'"* The flood is a giant indictment of this type of lifestyle: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.* Peter revealed that all who think God has not openly manifested His displeasure at the way they are living are *"wilfully forgetting"* the flood. (Rom. 1:18, 2Pet. 3:3-13). Peter then went on to reveal that God's displeasure is still waiting for a day to be revealed. On that day it will not be water, but fire dissolving the heavens, the earth and all its works.

While the vast majority of God's of Eve's descendants followed this path, there were a few, who considered themselves as "*strangers and exiles*." These were men and women who longed to live the life God was living in heaven and repudiated the selfish and evil exploitation of others that they saw in the rest of men. God listed Abel, Enoch and Noah as individuals who felt this way prior to the flood. It is important to remember that both Abel and Enoch were prophets (Lk. 11:50; Jude 14;), and God used them to proclaim His will. After the flood, God also spoke of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob and said concerning all, both before and after the flood: *"These **all** died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."* (Heb. 11:13-14).

It is an amazing thing that God's children cannot feel at home here, but because of the direction of the vast majority of the children of Adam and Eve have chosen that is exactly how it is. Paul revealed the sad reality in the first three chapters of Romans. He charted the history of the world after the flood along with the rise of the nations. These people *"knew God,"* but *"refused to glorify Him as God"* or even *"give thanks"* to Him for all His gifts. Following Cain in *"leaving the presence of the Lord,"* they *"refused to retain have God in their knowledge"* and *"exchanged the truth of God for a lie"* of their own devising. They soon returned to a selfish and unrighteous lifestyle similar to those prior to the flood (Rom. 1:24-32).

This continued until God called Abraham and gave him the promise that all future "*strangers and exiles*" would become his offspring. Yet after God gave the law on Sinai, it became evident that it was not these fleshly children of Abraham that God was speaking about. They were also so selfish and self-centered that God said of them: *"I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"* (Heb. 3:11). Of that entire generation, only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter that rest. The others all fell in the wilderness one by one. After the death of Joshua, *"another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel."* (Judg. 2:10) and once again even in the midst of Israel those who truly wanted to serve the Lord were *"strangers and exiles."* This continued throughout the history of Israel. In the days of Isaiah, God said: *"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved."* (Rom. 9:27). Also, as Stephen said just before they killed him, *"Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,"* (Acts 7:52-53).

Yet through the countless generations that have come and gone, men and women from all over the globe continue to come out of the midst of the selfish and cruel and live as "*strangers and exiles*." They leave those who are unloving and unmerciful and seek to serve God and become His loving and just people. As all these people are added up through the centuries in the midst of the billions and billions who have lived and died, God summed it up: *"Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky"*

in multitude — innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.”

God chose Abraham not only as the Father of the Jewish nation, but far more importantly the father of all the “strangers and exiles” who love the Lord and are seeking Him, not only his physical descendants from the law, but also including the Gentiles. *“For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith,” “not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.” (Rom. 4:13-17). “Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham,” “that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:7-14).*

Conclusion: As God told the angel before He destroyed Jerusalem *“Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.” (Ezek. 9:4).* True “strangers and exiles” are deeply troubled, sighing, crying and mourning over the evil actions of the selfish wicked. For this reason, Lot was a true “stranger and exile” and God delivered him out of Sodom for the same reason as that given in Ezekiel above: *“delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).” (2Pet. 2:7-8).* Thus the true “strangers and exiles” are revealed. But for the wicked it is different: *“who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.” (Rom. 1:32).* Are we among the true children of Abraham, manifesting the love, righteousness and justice of God to all we meet?

The Price to Become a Stranger & Exile

Introduction: Jesus was very open with all who want to His disciples. The cost of full commitment is much higher than many imagine, potentially damaging all previous relationships. Jesus said *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, ... and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.”* (Mt. 10:34-37). As we carefully digest these words, coming from the *“Prince of peace,”* they are hard to understand. Yet as we witness it happen, it is evident Jesus was not speaking of His will or intent, but only of consequences. When forced to choose His will over the desires of friends and family, we will indeed make *“enemies.”*

This is as simple as our family planning a gathering on the first day of the week only to hear that we would rather worship with our brethren than be with them. This easily kindles jealousy, bitterness and resentment. It could also be a situation where the family continues to drink alcohol, engage in immodest behavior, watch a vile movie, or anything else we know our Lord condemns. When we choose to stand with Him against sin and ungodliness the price will often be rejection and even hatred: *“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”* (Jn. 15:18-20).

As we grow in our walk with the Lord, it becomes more and more clear to us that we are becoming increasingly out of step with those around us. As we stop *“being conformed”* and begin to *“transform,”* the *“light”* we project becomes as distasteful to those in darkness as the light of Jesus we are reflecting: *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.”* (Jn. 3:19-20).

After entering the narrow gate leading to life, the farther down the difficult path we travel the fewer fellow travelers we will find. Lot found himself alone in Sodom, Jeremiah found himself alone in Jerusalem, and Jesus, even in the fullness of time, found only a small handful. Many are truly *“strangers and exiles”* even in the midst of their own friends and family. As *“they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you,”* we become more and more isolated. (1Pet. 4:4). Yet as we grow in the faith our choices become clearer and easier to make. As we learn that *“friendship with the world is enmity with God, Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God”* (Jas. 4:4), and *“all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world.”* (1Jn. 2:16), we will find ourselves needing to avoid the terrible choice our loved ones force is to make. So many who have lived before us made the wrong choice: *“they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”* (Jn. 12:43). Jesus expects much more of us than to make such a choice: *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”* (Mt. 10:37). Yet when our loved ones put us in this position, when we love Him more, the results Jesus described above will surely come.

As we put off the old man and put on the new man, we become more and more instep with the Lord and His people, but also have less and less in common with those, no matter how much we loved and respected, who remained in the world. As *“old things pass away and they become new”* our consecrated walk with God leads us to become more and more out of step and strange to those who once knew us when we lived as *“the old man.”* After we *“were raised with Christ,”* in baptism and began to *“seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God,”* how could we fit in anymore? When we *“set our mind on things above, not on things on the earth,”* and *“put to death our members which are on the earth,”* our influence becomes less and less palatable with those who have no intention of making such changes.

Paul made it clear that not only do we reflect Christ's light as we walk in the midst of those in darkness, but we also have a distinctive smell, that being in fellowship with Christ imparts. *"We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life."* (2Cor. 2:15-16). Yet it is made clear that the odor differs among those who smell it. For those who stand with God, it is a fragrance of life. But for those in the world, the fragrance of the Christian is a fragrance of death. Both our *"light"* and *"fragrance"* are pleasant and joyous to our fellow sojourners. But for those who are still in and of the world, the light is odious and the fragrance foul and bitter indeed. This is why they said of Lot: *"This one came in to stay here, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them."* It was Lot's responses to their sinful actions and his refusal to participate and even to try and stop their sinful behavior that had not gone unnoticed. They could sense he *"was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)."* (Gen. 19:9; 2Pet. 2:7-8).

The dilemma we face is not new! It has been the lot of all who came out, since the very beginning. After they freely *"confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,"* this price had to be paid. This was the price Moses was more than willing to pay when he *"refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin."* (Heb. 11:13-27). We must pay the same price today. God has demanded that we *"come out from among them and be separate."* There can be *"no fellowship between light and darkness"* when the darkness either hates or seeks to overwhelm the light. Truly, *"evil companions do corrupt good morals,"* even if they are old friends or family members. (2Cor. 6:14-18; 1Cor. 15:33).

We made a choice when we became a Christian. When we learned that we were *"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world,"* we obeyed the gospel to change our citizenship and allegiance. At that time, God *"delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."* Now, we are just like those who lived before us. We too are *"no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets."* (Eph. 2:12-20; Col. 1:13).

This was the choice Jesus described in the treasure hidden in the field. We had to sell all that we had to buy that field. We sold our citizenship and allegiance in this world to become citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Now, *"our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,"* (Phil. 3:20-21). But we must live as "strangers and pilgrims here in this world. Never forgetting that just as those before us we too face the same danger: *"if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return."* We can't fit in here. If we try, we just buy up our opportunity to return.

Conclusion: *"God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them,"* is the promise for all who are truly *"strangers and pilgrims"* to the degree described in this lesson. (Heb. 11:16). Jesus was very comforting when He said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."* (Lk. 18:29-30). The loss of friends and family, the terrible price of persecution and tribulation are the lonely and bitter lot of strangers and pilgrims, but what a small price to pay to have God proud to be our God and a wonderful city waiting just beyond the horizon of this life.

Strangers and Exiles- 3: Children of Abraham

Introduction: Because *“the whole world lies under the power of the evil one,”* the children of God have been forced to *“come out from among them and be separate.”* (1Jn. 5:19, 2Cor. 6:17). Jesus revealed to Paul that the entire purpose for his preaching the gospel was *“to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”* (Acts 26:18). While Satan continues to have influence and power over those who remain in the world, those who serve God do not feel at home here. *“Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”* (Phil. 3:20). Truly, we will *“spend the rest of our time in the flesh”* as *“strangers and exiles”* in this world of darkness and sin.

The moment we obeyed the gospel, we changed our family, our citizenship, and our allegiance: *“But you are a elect race, (family) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, (citizenship) a people for (God's) own possession (allegiance).”* (1Pet. 2:9). *“He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”* This is the true meaning of being *“born of water and the Spirit,”* and being *“born again”* to become a *“new creation.”* As soon as we received *“the adoption as sons,”* *“we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.”* (Jn. 1:12; 3:3-5; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 4:5, 28-29). Have we truly understood the honor and privilege that was bestowed upon us when we became children and heirs of Abraham by promise just like Isaac was?

When God called Abraham out of Ur, he began a sojourn so similar to our own, that God purposed to make him the father of the “elect race.” While we can easily see how he became the father of all true and faithful servants of God in Israel. What is equally important is that after Jesus died on the cross, God made provisions so that Abraham would also become the father of all the Gentiles who obeyed the gospel.

The true kingdom of God was always a remnant even when it was in Israel. Even in the days of Isaiah, God proclaimed that the physical seed of Abraham was never a part of the promise He made to Abraham regarding this seed. *“Isaiah cries concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved”* Even before Paul quoted this verse, he had stated: *“For they are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children,”* (Rom. 9:6-7; 27). This is why both John and Jesus called the leaders in Israel *“offspring of vipers,”* and led Jesus to tell them: *“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.”* (Mt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33; Jn. 8:44). The truth is simple, yet profound. *“If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.”* It was never the blood in their veins, but the devotion and faith to God in their hearts that made them true sons of Abraham.

Jesus warned Israel that after “the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone,” “the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.” (Mt. 21:42). As Peter preached the gospel for the first time, he used *“the keys of the kingdom”* to open the door to the true children of Abraham who were at that time dwelling in the midst of those who had rejected Jesus. He clearly revealed: *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”* (Acts 2:36-39). When they cried out *“what shall we do”* Peter *“said to them, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”* He then revealed: *“the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”* What Peter did not yet know was that those *“who are afar off,”* were the Gentiles. (Acts 10; Eph. 2:11-18).

God made it very clear that “it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed.” (Rom. 9:6-8). Since *“we, like Isaac are children of promise,”* God wanted us to know *“that they that are of faith, the same are sons of*

Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand unto Abraham, (saying,) In you shall all the nations be blessed. So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham. (Gal. 3:7-9). This amazing promise in the Scriptures ought to fill us with awe and amazement. Everyone in the church has been adopted into God's spiritual family and has become a child of Abraham, just like Isaac.

Paul tied this directly to the same baptism Peter commanded above. *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And **if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.** (Gal. 3:26-29)

There can be no doubt that those who are baptized into Christ are the true seed of Abraham. God has added us to His people just as He promised He would do in Isaiah 54 (if you take the time to read this verse now, it will have great meaning to you). All the promises and covenants that God gave to Abraham and his descendants are now our promises and covenants! While we were *"separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world, now in Christ Jesus you that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ."* *"So then ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."* (Eph. 2:12-13; 19)

"As heirs according to the promise," we are destined to inherit all that God has promised to His people. Because Abraham is our father, everything written in the Old Testament is the history of our people. Not physical Israel with all its blights and stumbles into sin. They were not His people unless they did the works for Abraham. We are not related to those sinners whose lives were recorded so we would not *"fall after the same example of disobedience."*

Our people are those who served God faithfully as true children of Abraham. Their lives are recorded in Hebrews 11! Everyone who was faithful to God was under consideration: *"what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets."* These are our *"great a cloud of witnesses,"* that *"surround"* us. (Heb. 4:11; 11:32; 12:1). We were strangers and exiles from His people, but after God *"delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son,"* we are now *"strangers and exiles"* from those in the darkness and *fellow citizens* with all the saints from the beginning until the end. (Col. 1:13).

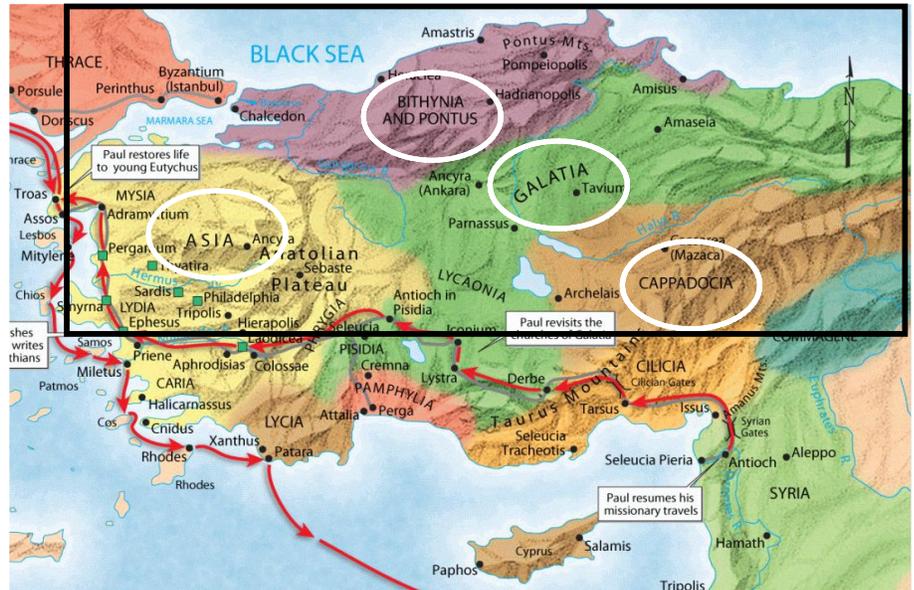
As we read passages in the Scriptures that apply to Abraham and his children, we need to pay special attention to them for they are now ours just as much as they were those who lived before us. As God told Israel He would now have us understand: *"Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him."* (Isa 51:1-2).

Conclusion: If we look to the rock from which we were hewn we find that in the eyes of God, Abraham was made of gold, silver and precious stones. If we follow him we too will come from the same quarry and have the same quality. Only when we *"walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had"* can Abraham be our true father. If we will look to him, follow him and walk in his steps we will have the same quality to God that he did. God has so planned the gospel that we have to walk in the same steps he did. *"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country.* (Heb. 11:8-10). Since God now calls us through the gospel and when we obey the gospel we come out from among them and live as strangers and exiles in the midst of those citizens of this world. We are walking in the steps of his faith. So it will continue until the end.

"But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, The descendants of Abraham My friend. 9 You whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, And called from its farthest regions, And said to you, 'You are My servant, I have chosen you and have not cast you away: 10 Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.' (Isa. 41:8-10)

in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

Each of these is a province with many churches in them. John wrote to the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4), and Paul wrote to the churches in Galatia (Gal. 1:2). We do not know how many were in Pontus, Cappadocia or Bithynia. These are found just above the cities Paul preached to on his first missionary journey. Paul attempted to go into Asia and Bithynia on the second journey and was forbidden (Acts 16:5-7). Several of these provinces were represented when the first sermon was preached by Peter (Acts 2:9). Therefore Peter had become familiar with some who were living in these provinces.



*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ... 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and **Cappadocia**, **Pontus** and **Asia**, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Acts 2:5,9-10*

Aquila had also been born in Pontus.

*And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in **Pontus**, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla Acts 18:2*

We learn that Paul went to **Galatia**, on the second missionary journey, but we learn more about this visit in the letter he wrote to them than we do from Luke's account:

*Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of **Galatia**, they **were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia**. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they **tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them**. Acts 16:6-8*

Paul had been forbidden to enter Bithynia and Asia at that time, but at some time later, he or someone else had gone there. Yet there is also the possibility at least for Pontus and Cappadocia that these were started by those who heard Peter's sermon in Acts 2 and remained in Jerusalem until Saul laid waste the church. Peter may have had a strong tie with these churches for that reason.

Among the most important things we must remember about this letter is that it reaches out to multiple congregations in diverse areas of the Roman empire. This will be important when we assess Peter's words to the elders in Chapter Five.

2 elect

These pilgrims of the dispersion who are *elect*. Most of translations (except KJV/NKJV) keep this term in the original Greek word order. But since it is an adjective, it can be placed here as a

further description of those who strangers and pilgrims. Like most adjectives, we can say the house that is green or the green house. So also here, the elect exiles (ESV) or the aliens who are chosen (NASB).

*to the **elect** who are sojourners of the Dispersion... (ASV)*

*To the pilgrims of the Dispersion... **elect** according to... (NKJ)*

*To those who reside as aliens... who are **chosen** 2 according to the foreknowledge of God (NASB)*

*those who are **elect** exiles of the dispersion according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (ESV)*

Both capture the intent. The elect are the picked out, chosen, select, and choice ones. There were still many in the dispersion who had not yet been chosen. They have heard but rejected or not yet heard. Peter is not writing to any of the dispersion who have yet to be called, because all the blessings he will go on to describe are only for those who are already “elect.”

“eklektos... picked out, chosen... 1. chosen by God... hence Christians are called... the chosen or elect of God... 2. Unive. Choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellent, preeminent...” (Thayer, p 197; 1588)

Peter will return to this in the next chapter and discuss it much more fully (1Pet. 2:4-10). While God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, each man or woman, by their own free will, will make the final determination (the deciding vote) that will complete the election, selection, or rejection. Paul spoke of this in the first chapter of the first Corinthian letter. God chose things that are foolish, base, weak and despised and placed them in the gospel to test us for a love for the truth and an absolute faith and trust in God that is willing to set aside what we understand in order to trust in Him.

Hence, Those who obey the gospel are the elect and all who reject the gospel reject the honor of being chosen and picked out by God. that honor.

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

God’s “foreknowledge” is one of the both comforting and perplexing. It gives us the comfort that because God knows everything before hand He can never be surprised or placed in a position where we often are when something arises we were not prepared for.

proginosko, prognosis ... to know about something prior to some temporal reference point, for example, to know about an event before it happens - 'to know beforehand, to know already, to have foreknowledge.' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT: 4268)

Since we know that God promised before time began that He would give us eternal life, He factored in every obstacle and problem we might face in reaching it and has already given us the solution. It is this foreknowledge that makes it possible for Him to reveal Scripture once for all time, knowing that nothing new will arise that He was unprepared for.

Peter here revealed that our election was based on and “according to” God’s foreknowledge.

“kata,... a preposition denoting motion or diffusion or direction from the higher to the lower... II with the Accusative... 3. it denotes reference, relation, proportion, of various sorts; a. distributively, indicating a succession of things following one another... b... as respects; with regard to; in reference to; so far as relates to; as concerning;...c. according to, agreeably to; in reference to agreement or conformity to a standard, in various ways (aa) according to anything as a standard, agreeably to...(bb) in proportion to, according to the measure of...” (Thayer, p. 328; 2596)

The relationship between our election and God’s foreknowledge are like two sides of an equation. His foreknowledge = our election. This election of God is in harmony and according to God’s foreknowledge. Paul elaborated more fully in His letters.

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, Eph. 1:4-5

This passage reveals that God was well aware of all the obstacles and problems that would

have to be overcome, but loved us so much that He was willing to do it all to make us holy and without blemish. He knew there would be a group of men and women who were ashamed of their lives and thoughts. Who wanted to do better and wanted to be right with Him, and would be willing to do whatever He asked and believe whatever He revealed.

These people are the ones Peter is writing to at this time. We must search the Scriptures to find all that God has revealed about these things to be certain that we have done all within our power to be all that God foreknew that we could become.

While God wants all men to be saved, it is evident that not all are saved. While some would blame Him stating that He is the one who chose this, that is a terrible and vile false doctrine. To make God responsible for the terrible things man does and refuses to repent of is folly. God's foreknowledge of man's wicked use of his freewill does not make Him responsible for it.

Therefore election was foreknown by God, but still rests with each individual who must, as it were, cast the deciding vote in their own election. God is voting for all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. God is voting for all men to come to repentance. God is not willing that any should perish. Who then is responsible for our election? If God is voting for all, but not all are saved, then who made the final choice? Each person casts that vote for his or her election when they first hear the gospel and they decide whether to accept or reject it. Thus the free will of man is left intact by God. Each person must decide to obey God and submit to His commands before they can become elect. Each person has the right to become a child of God.

God's Foreknowledge

The teachings of the Scriptures about God's ability to "*have knowledge of beforehand*" is an attribute which is beyond man's ability to comprehend. We do not have such an ability so we cannot understand how it works. God has the ability to know how things are going to unfold and what the end result will be before they even occur. This is obviously one of the things God was speaking of in Isaiah.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa. 55:8-9

It seems to this author that some of the greatest doctrinal errors and controversies facing Jesus' disciples centers on things like this. When God reveals something that is far beyond man's own ability, our speculations on how God is able to do it or how he chooses to exercise such ability are worthless. Since his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts and the difference is so high that even that cannot be measured (we don't even know how high the heavens actually ascend), how baseless our own ideas are seen to be! What ought to be obvious is that since we cannot understand them, speculation is useless.

The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut. 29:29

Yet many are undeterred by such Scriptures. Through the lense of human eyes and with no guidance from the Holy Spirit some have sought to explain these secret things. Yet God's foreknowledge can only be what he reveals it to be. Nothing more and nothing less. Since we do not have this skill, we cannot determine exactly how it is used. The Spirit outlined the depths of God's knowledge in one of the Psalms of David. After reading it we can at least speak more intelligently about the subject.

O Jehovah, thou hast searched me, and known (me). 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou searchest out my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Jehovah,

thou knowest it altogether. 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me. 6 (Such) knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. 7 Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, surely the darkness shall overwhelm me, and the light about me shall be night; 12 Even the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike (to thee). 13 For thou didst form my inward parts: Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb. 14 I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Wonderful are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was made in secret, (and) curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written, (even) the days that were ordained (for me), when as yet there was none of them. Ps 139:1-16

God “searches” and “knows” us. He knows our “downsitting” and “uprising.” He understands our “thoughts afar off.” He is “acquainted with all our ways.” Every “word in our tongue” he “knows it altogether.” Even this knowledge is “too wonderful” for our writer, so “high” that he “cannot attain unto it.” This even includes knowing where he is at all times and being fully able to do the above under any and all circumstances. For our purposes though, it is 16 where “foreknowledge” is discussed. “Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance; and in thy book they were all written, (even) the days that were ordained (for me), when as yet there was none of them.” This is God’s foreknowledge! Before David was born, “the days that were ordained” for him were already “all written” in God’s book.”

This foreknowledge forms the heart of God’s ability to plan and then flawlessly carry out those plans. Immediately after Adam & Eve’s sin in the garden, God promised to send a savior. Later, to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah, he successively promised that their descendants would become a great nation and that the savior would be born through their children. Later prophets continued to give more and more details of God’s foreknowledge. He knew where Jesus would be born, and where he would be raised. He knew how he Jesus live, how he would die, etc. After the crucifixion, on the day of Pentecost, Peter informed the Jews (Acts 2:23) that all they had done was “by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” God had known and planned for these people to crucify Jesus. Does such foreknowledge take away freedom of choice and guilt for actions? Absolutely not! This will become the theme of the next chapter, so we will leave that to be explained at that time. Suffice it now only to quote the main concept of that chapter. God is the potter and we are the clay. The choices we make in how we live our lives determines the quality and type of clay that we become. By our own choices we make ourselves into vessels of honor of vessels of dishonor. After we make our choices, God then determines how we will be used.

Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. 20 Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some unto honor, and some unto dishonor. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work. 2Tim. 2:19-21

It is here that we must part company with those who wish to create elaborate ideas of exactly how all of this works. Only God knows exactly how all of this works because only God has this ability. The Scriptures do not tell us exactly how God uses this ability. Through all the multitudes of questions that will arise, Deut. 29:29 warns us not to go beyond what is written. God knows

our days, he knows our frame, he knows our strengths and our weaknesses. He wants all to be saved and come to repentance (2Tim. 2:3-5; 2Pet. 3:9). He blesses the poor in spirit and those who mourn (Mt. 5:3-4). While at the same time using men like Pharaoh, Judas and the Jewish rulers in the time of Jesus Christ to fulfill his purposes in a very negative way.

As is so often the case while walking the path that leads to life, we find doctrines in the Scriptures that are straitened and narrow. We must not stray to the right or to the left, but be content with what is written. The path to fully understanding God's foreknowledge is clouded by other Scriptures that warn us not to carry things too far.

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented Jehovah that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And Jehovah said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground; both man, and beast, and creeping things, and birds of the heavens; for it repenteth me that I have made them. Gen 6:5-7

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through (the fire) unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. Jer 32:35

How shall we understand these things? Can God repent and be grieved about what he already knew? Can he say it never came into his mind if he already knew? Does he know everything or voluntarily limit himself? Since we do not know the answer to these things, we must not go beyond what is written.

in sanctification of the Spirit,

The preposition "in" is always used when someone is in the midst or center of something.

"EN... *in, on, at, with, by among*. I LOCALLY; 1. of Place proper; a. in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space... 5. used of that with which a person is surrounded, equipped, furnished, assisted, or acts... c. of that which one either leads or brings with him, or with which he is furnished or equipped; esp after verbs of coming, (EN of accompaniment), where we often say *with* ... d. of the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished, owing to the influence of the Hebr. prep... much more common in the sacred writ. than in the prof... where we say *with, by means of, by(through)*..." (Thayer, p. 209-212; 1722)

Thus the elect are in the midst, in the interior of "sanctification of the Spirit." In this case, it is this sanctification that makes us elect. We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God "by means of" and "through the instrumentality of" the sanctification of the Spirit.

"*hagiasmos*... 1. *consecration, purification*... 2. the effect of consecration: sanctification of heart and life, ... " (Thayer, p. 6; 38)

Most of the words in the NT that begin with "hag" refer to something that has been sanctified, set apart and made holy to God. Everything that is connected to God is by definition holy and set apart for Him to use. Unfortunately, sin defiles and removes holiness. No one could be elect until they were consecrated and sanctified, in order to become holy and consecrated for God. The means by which the Holy Spirit accomplished this is the essence of the gospel. Paul spoke of it in Romans.

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, Rom. 3:23-26

When we are born of water and the Spirit (Jn. 3:3-5), we gain the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:3-5), and are there after sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Since only the Holy Spirit can give us the means by which that blood can be made accessible to us.

No one can be made elect without first being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Peter, speaking to mature Christians does not see the need to elaborate.

Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, 16 that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Rom. 15:16

Being sanctified by the Holy Spirit is accomplished through the ministering of the gospel of God. The Holy Spirit used men to preach the gospel which He revealed. When anyone obeys the gospel, the Spirit sanctifies them. Think of the sanctification of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8) the washing away of Paul's sins (Acts 22) and Cornelius (Acts 10). This was something God had chosen from the beginning, and by first sending Jesus to die and shed His blood, and then to send the Holy Spirit to explain it all and bring the sanctification that comes through faith, trust, and obedience.

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Th 2:13-14

There is nothing mysterious or difficult about it. The Holy Spirit revealed the gospel, it is His sword (Eph 6:17), only by its use can anyone be sanctified by him.

for obedience

The preposition "for" is another term used many times in the New Testament. It is defined:

"eis,... a Prep. governing the Accusative, and denoting entrance into, or direction and limit: into, to, towards, for, among. ... 3. it denotes the end; and a. the end to which a thing reaches or extends, i.e. measure or degree... b. the end which a thing is adapted to attain... c. the end which one has in view, i.e. object, purpose;... d. the end by which a thing is completed, i.e. the result or effect... (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

This is a preposition that is used when one is outside and wants to enter. Whatever follows this preposition is the means by which the "motion," "direction," or "end" can be accomplished. God wanted obedience. This is why the Holy Spirit sanctified. This is why God chose the elect in His foreknowledge. This is what makes us His elect, day by day. All followers of the Lord who have become sanctified through their hearkening to the call, do so to comply and be in submission to God. This is the purpose of their election. Those in Christ are the elect and the sanctified and have been given all this grace in order that they might be led to obedience to God. Thus "obedience" is of the greatest importance to the Christian.

"hupakouo... to listen, hearken; 1. prop: of one who on a knock at the door comes to listen who it is, (the duty of the porter)... 2. to hearken to a command, i.e. to obey, be obedient unto, submit to..." (Thayer, p. 638; 5219)

Two things are therefore required for true obedience. First, there must be a careful listening to the commands, it just won't do for one not to hear exactly what God expects. Second, there must be a submission and obedience to those things that are carefully heard. Several passages come to mind. James warns us to be doers and not hearers only (James 1:22-25), while Paul stated that this had been God's intent for ages.

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for (eis) obedience (hupakouo) to the faith – Rom. 16:25-26

and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

In one short verse, Peter has described the role of the Father, the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in

our salvation. The Father made the plans in His foreknowledge, Jesus came to earth and created the means by which those plans could be accomplished and the Holy Spirit then revealed exactly what must be done to receive the sanctification God had foreknown and Jesus had made possible.

What Jesus did is summed up with the term “*sprinkling of the blood.*” This is an Old Testament concept that was elaborated on in Hebrews.

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... 19 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, “This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.” 21 Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry... 23 Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; Heb 9:11-12; 19-21; 23-24

What the Old Testament typified and shadowed with the sprinkling of the blood of the animal on all parts of the tabernacle and the people, along with the Passover itself, is exactly what Jesus did after His blood was shed and He returned to heaven.

By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them. Heb. 11:28

It is exactly what He has done for us. Without the shedding of blood no remission can occur. Jesus brought his blood right into heaven where he can now sprinkle it upon the souls of those who are in need of it. This He does as each is baptized (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12-13; 1Pet. 3:21-23). We are buried in the water of baptism after our faith and repentance have reached a level strong enough to force us into that burial. When this occurs God applies the blood. God also explains how this blood is continued to be sprinkled throughout the life of a Christian. (1 Jn 1:6-8; 2:1).

Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

These are the standard Greek and Hebrew terms of greeting for that day. They are used in the majority of the NT epistles. They elevate the common greetings of the day into something greater and higher. Peter greets them with the hope (from God who can bring it to pass) that they will have a day filled with wonderful peace and grace.

These two verses should greatly elevate the self-image of all God’s people. Though the world may not view or treat them well, God holds such in the highest regard. They are His elect, choice and precious ones. They are elect because God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus have put forth great effort and energy to bring them into that condition. As far as God is concerned (and what else matters), these sojourners are the greatest people on the earth. God did all this so they would be obedient. That very obedience to God is also the reason for the persecution they were enduring.

3 Blessed be

The term “blessed” comes from a Greek term that has found its way directly into our language. When we give a eulogy, we are doing what Peter does here.

“eulogeo lit., to speak well of (eu, well, logos, a word), signifies, (a) to praise, to celebrate with praises, of that which is addressed to God, acknowledging His goodness, with desire for His glory, ... (b) to invoke blessings upon a person... (c) to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers, to ask God’s blessing on a thing... (d) to cause to prosper, to make happy, to bestow blessings on, ...” (Vine, W. E., Expository Dictionary of NT Words, Vol. I, P. 132-133)

This is how exactly how Paul had begun the letter to the Ephesians. God is worthy of all the praise, adoration and consecration that we can bestow upon Him. He is wonderful and gracious! He is great and awesome! He is Worthy! God's people should always praise honor and adore Him for the works of grace and kindness He has placed in their lives.

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is a rich and beautiful expression encompassing the union and closeness of the Father to our Lord. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, though speaking of the need to praise and glorify the Father, it is the relationship He has with His Son that is emphasized by this phrase. It was God who sent Jesus into the world to become His Son and to save all of us of our sins. It was His plan and His desire and will that Jesus came to accomplish. Hence all the praise and adoration we feel toward Jesus should also be directed to the Father because everything that Jesus did for our salvation is what God wanted Him to do.

who according to His abundant mercy

Peter now uses "*kata*" to make "*God's mercy*" = "*our being begotten again.*" Our being born again, is "*in proportion to*" and "*in regard to*" His mercy. God was merciful and compassionate toward us and this prompted Him to do something for us. It was because of this mercy that He begat us again unto living hope. It is also this mercy that should bring about our "*eulogy*" to God. "Mercy" is:

"eleos... mercy; kindness or good will toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them; 1. of men towards men... 2. of God towards men... 3. the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life... (Thayer, p. 203-204; 1656)

*"In Greek, *eleos (mercy)* is a *pathos (strong emotion)*, ...the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else. ... in the face of the unfortunate this emotion is an *eleein* which includes the elements of both awe and mercy... in this sense of mercy, sympathy is very common. (Kittel Vol 2 p. 477-487)*

It is amazing and wonderful to think that our God with the foreknowledge of our terrible wickedness and evil would still feel mercy toward us. He feels sympathy, pity, compassion, and good will, but that alone is not mercy. It was also joined with a powerful desire to relieve and help man in his sinful state. This mercy was so vast that the Spirit put a superlative in front of it to describe its quantity and quality.

*"*polus...* much used a. Of multitude, number, *many numerous, great...* b. with nouns denoting an action an emotion, a state, which can be said to have as it were measure, weight, force, intensity, size, continuance, or repetition, *much* l. q. *great, strong, intense, large...* c. Of time *much long ...* d. Neut. Adverbially, of the mode and degree of an action..." (Thayer, p. 529; 4183)*

God had an emotion of mercy that was "*great, strong, intense, and large.*" So much so that it is as high as the heavens are above the earth.

For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, So the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. Ps. 103:11-14

It was with these feelings in His heart that with His foreknowledge, He devised, sent His Son to execute and the Holy Spirit to reveal exactly how it would be done.

has begotten us again

"begotten again" is a single term in the original language:

"ana-gennao... to produce again, beget again, beget anew;..." (Thayer, p. 36; 313)

God produced us again. He set up a plan to change us into something new. This is the new birth.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Jn 3:3-5

This is the spiritual reality of our salvation. We were dead in our trespasses. But in the midst of obedience to the gospel, at the point of baptism, God made us alive again.

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ... 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), Eph 2:1, 4-5

buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col. 2:12-13

Since we were dead, we needed to be born again before we could enter the kingdom of God, exactly as Jesus stated above.

Everything God did to make this new birth possible are attributed to His great mercy. Back in eternity expending great effort to devise a plan whereby sinful creatures might be brought back to him. Considering the awesome price that would have to be paid and then willingly paying that price. Truly God is worthy to be praised.

to a living hope

Peter uses the preposition "eis" to stress the entrance into along with the purpose and result. God's purpose for our being born again was that we might receive a living hope. Thus the result of being born again is that we are now in possession of a living "hope."

"elpis... expectation, hope; i.e expectation whether good or ill; 1. rarely in a bad sense, expectation of evil, fear; ... 2. much more fre. in the classics, and always in the N. T. , in a good sense: expectation of good, hope; and in the Christian sense, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation..." (Thayer, p. 205-206; 1680)

People's expectations of the future give them a reason and the excitement to keep them doing what they are presently doing, even when they must make sacrifices to do it. People find it much easier to make sacrifices and suffer deprivation when they know it is temporary and it is for a very good reason.

Hope is always made up of two essential components. First there must be a strong desire for what has been promised, and then there must be a confident expectation that we will be able to receive it. If either of those is absent then there is no hope. But once we have both of these, then we will eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Rom. 8:24-25

This is exactly what Abraham felt when God told him he would soon have a son. Though he called something that did not exist as though it did, Abraham did not waver. His confident expectation was based on God's promise and thus, never wavering, his absolute trust gave glory to God.

Abraham ... believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, ... 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, Rom. 4:17-21

We are now to do exactly what our father Abraham has done. Regardless of the circumstances,

we too will never waver through unbelief. This is a living hope, that passes right through any terrible circumstances and even death itself. When all other hopes are gone, this one is still alive!

“zao... to live... I prop. 1. to live, be among the living, be alive(not lifeless, not dead)... 2. to enjoy real life, i.e. to have true life and worthy of the name, --active, blessed, endless in the kingdom of god... 3. to live i. e. pass life, of the manner of living and acting; of morals or character...” (Thayer, p. 269-270; 2198)

This is the great difference between the one hope (Eph 4:4) of the Christian that God has given to us all the other hopes and dreams men have devised to take its place. It manifests God's great mercy, gives us another reason to speak well of and praise him. This hope gives us a reason to live, as it is a joyful and confident expectation that what we are living for will bring a reward beyond our highest dream.

This is the dynamo of motivation that keeps each Christian going. As Abraham before us, it is a living hope that cannot be quenched regardless of the obstacles. Every other hope this life offers cannot pass the veil of death. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. (1Tim. 6:7). But the hope we have from God is living, active and alive. It will pass beyond this life into eternity.

Those whose hope for the future is based on money, power, recreation, or family, do not have a living hope. None of them can pass with him to the other side. No matter how much effort and toil we put into them and no matter how greatly successful we might be in attaining them, if we are thoughtful and considering all the factors, it is all vanity and a striving after wind (

Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, For my heart rejoiced in all my labor; And this was my reward from all my labor. 11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun. Eccl. 2:10-11

But we have a living hope because we have been begotten again. This is a hope that all that we now do will pass with us into the next life. That which the Egyptians futilely attempted by burying their possessions with them God has freely offered to His elect.

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

The preposition “through” is defined:

“dia.. .A. with the GENITIVE: through... III. of the Means or Instrument by which anything is effected; because what is done by means of a person or thing seems to pass as it were through the same... 2. of the instrument used to accomplish a thing; or the instrumental cause in the stricter sense:... by the service, the intervention of, by means of, with the help of... 3. with the gen. of a thing DIA is used to denote the manner in which a thing is done, or the formal cause... II. of the Ground or Reason one account of which anything is or is not done; by reason of, because of... 1. of the reason for which a things is done, or of the efficient reason, when for greater perspicuity it may be rendered by... 2. of the reason or cause on account of which anything is or is done, or ought to be done; on account of, because of... “. (Thayer, p. 132-135; 1223)

The means by which God has given us this living hope is our faith and conviction that God raised Jesus from the dead. It is our conviction on this topic that not only gives us a living hope, but also reckons our faith as righteousness.

being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom 4:21-25

This is the foundation and the proof upon which to base our living hope. It gives substance and assurance to it. The fact that Jesus was denied His life, was beaten, tortured, mistreated and killed, then raised from that death to receive blessings from God for doing it gives assurance to

those who must do the same. The doctrine of the resurrection and the proofs that Jesus truly was raised from the dead gives great assurance to those who wish to believe that it can be done. The 500 witnesses prove that Jesus was raised and with that proven our own resurrection naturally follows. Rom. 1:3-4; Acts 17:30-31; 1Cor. 15:12-19

4 to an inheritance

Peter again uses “*eis*” to denote purpose. God’s intent in giving to us this hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was in order that we might have this inheritance. This is a secondary reason for Jesus resurrection. It is what our living hope focuses on concerning the resurrection. The resurrection is a portal, a means by which we gain something else. It is not the full fruition of the hope given to Jesus’ disciples by the mercy of God. It is only the door that brings it all to us. God promises an inheritance.

“kleronomia... 1. An inheritance, property received (or to be received) by inheritance... 2. What is given to one as a possession... a. Eternal blessedness in the consummated kingdom of God which is to be expected after the visible return of Christ... b. The share which an individual will have in that eternal blessedness... (Thayer, P. 349;2817)

God has given us some powerful promises regarding this inheritance.

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8:15-18

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Gal. 4:6-7

When each of us was born again we first became a Christian and a son of God. But as a result of becoming a son, we also have become heirs to the inheritance of eternal life with God in heaven. An inheritance so glorious that no tribulations, trials or suffering in this life are worthy to be compared with it. God explained through Peter that this was His purpose and the end result of His mercy. There are so many verses that describe this inheritance to us. We will receive an incorruptible body, a new heavens and new earth made out of the heavenly image. It will be a glory that cannot be compared with the sufferings of this present time.

incorruptible

Another reason why this is a living hope is because it is not subject to decay, it does not lesson with the passage of time.

“aphthartos... uncorrupted, not liable to corruption or decay, imperishable... immortal: of the risen dead...” (Thayer, P. 349; 2817)

diaphthora an intensified form of No. 1, "utter or thorough corruption," referring in the NT to physical decomposition and decay, is used six times, five of which refer, negatively, to the body of God's "Holy One," after His death, which body, by reason of His absolute holiness, could not see "corruption," Acts 2:27,31; 13:34-35,37; (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1312),

aphartos "not liable to corruption or decay, incorruptible" (a, negative, and A, No. 2), is used of (a) God, Rom 1:23; 1 Tim 1:17 (KJV, "immortal"); (b) the raised dead, 1 Cor 15:52; (c) rewards given to the saints hereafter, metaphorically described as a "crown," 1 Cor 9:25; (d) the eternal inheritance of the saints, 1 Peter 1:4; (e) the Word of God, as incorruptible" seed, 1 Peter 1:23; (f) a meek and quiet spirit, metaphorically spoken of as "incorruptible" apparel, 1 Peter 3:4. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:862)

This inheritance is not subject to decay. It will not corrupt. It is not like a flower or even a human body. It is imperishable All that is around us now is incorruptible. People, homes, cars, trees,

fences, appliances. All grow old, decay and ultimately cease to function. Not so the inheritance of the Christian.

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 1Cor. 15:52-54

All that we see happening around us will not affect our hope. The corruption of this age will not pass through to our inheritance. It is above and beyond anything in this life. It will never decay, never grow old, it will retain its newness, cleanness, beauty and effective through out eternity.

and undefiled

"amiantos... not defiled, unsoiled; free from that by which the nature of a thing is deformed and debased or its force and vigor impaired..." (Thayer, P. 32; 283)

Our inheritance is like the garden of Eden before sin entered. It is unsoiled and free from any of the things which could defile and debase it. This too is the hope for the child of God. It will never be changed for the worse. It is not able to be stained or scratched, bumped or scraped.

and that does not fade away,

"amarantos... not fading away, unfading, perennial..." (Thayer, P. 30; 262)

A. maraino ... was used (a) to signify "to quench a fire," and in the passive voice, of the "dying out of a fire"; hence (b) in various relations, in the active voice, "to quench, waste, wear out"; in the passive, "to waste away," James 1:11, of the "fading" away of a rich man, as illustrated by the flower of the field. (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:3133)

amarantos "unfading" (a, negative, and A, above), whence the "amaranth," an unfading flower, a symbol of perpetuity ... 353), is used in 1 Peter 1:4 of the believer's inheritance, "that fadeth not away." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:263)

A fire left untended will fade away. A flower once cut and given as a gift, immediately begins to fade. So does the finish on a new car, and the carpet in a new home. There are few gifts that one could give to another that would not fade and tarnish with the passage of time. But this inheritance will never fade. It never loses its beauty or its freshness. Though flowers fade, rapidly losing both their color and beauty, heaven will never fade or lessen in quality.

reserved in heaven for you,

"tereo... to attend to carefully, take care of; i.e. a. prop. to guard... b. metaph. to keep, ... to hold firmly... c. to observe ... d. to reserve..." (Thayer, p. 622; 5083)

Reserved is only one of the definitions of this term. Our inheritance is carefully being attended and guarded for us. Our God will keep it for us and no one can take it away. It will be there for us when we are ready for it. If we remain faithful in our service to Him then it will definitely be there. Our inheritance is being safely kept for us. It cannot be removed, broken into, defiled, or harmed. God is guarding and keeping it for us.

The greatness of this hope is enhanced when all other can be either willingly or by force taken from us. The natural aging process purges many of the false and foolish hopes from us. We brought nothing in and can carry nothing out. One by one all other hopes are dead or dying because we will lose everyone one of them as we pass from this life. But this one hope of the Christian is reserved in heaven and it cannot be lost or taken from us. Wise Christians remove the crutch of these false hopes and focus on this one hope (Eph. 4:4) that God has reserved in heaven for us.

5 who are kept by the power of God

Not only is this hope being preserved and guarded for us, but those of us who have that hope are also being guarded. While the former term has as one of its definitions “guarded,” this one, used here, is the military term, used exclusively for guarding, either by preventing a hostile invasion, or protecting and preserving those who are there.

“phroureo, 1. To keep... to guard, protect by a military guard, either in order to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a besieged city from flight... to protect by guarding... to preserve one for the attainment of something... I Pet 1:5...” (Thayer, p. 658; 5432).

phroureo ... a military term, “to keep by guarding, to keep under guard,” as with a garrison (phrouros, “a guard, or garrison”), is used, (a) of blocking up every way of escape, as in a siege; (b) of providing protection against the enemy, as a garrison does; see 2 Cor 11:32, “guarded.” KJV, “kept,” i. e., kept the city, “with a garrison.” It is used of the security of the Christian until the end, 1 Peter 1:5, RV, “are guarded,” and of the sense of that security that is his when he puts all his matters into the hand of God, Phil 4:7, (Vine’s Expository Dictionary, NT:5432)

We are being guarded because we are in the center (*en - in the midst of some whole*) of God’s protective power. The church is likened here to a fortress, and those who have entered it are now under the protective power of God. This is God’s inherent power, in which there is nothing impossible or too powerful for God to deal with it.

“dunamis...strength, ability, power; a. univ. inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth... b. specifically, the power of performing miracles... c. moral power and excellence of soul... d. the power and influence which belong to riches... e. power and resources arising from numbers...” (Thayer, p. 159; 1411)

This was Paul’s point in Romans:

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom 8:37-39

Jesus made a similar point using the protection those who come through the one door will receive.

7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ... 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ... 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand. 30 I and My Father are one.” Jn. 10:7-9; 27-30

God is guarding and protecting both our inheritance in heaven and our own ability to be worthy to receive it. Thus both sides of hope are guarded. Our desire and our expectation are both fixed and established. It’s value is beyond our imagination, and our ability to receive it is also more secure and protected than we can imagine. That is why all our fathers and we ourselves are completely sojourners and pilgrims here.

All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them. Heb. 11:13-16

through faith

Using the preposition “*dia-* of the Means or Instrument by which anything is effected; instrumental cause “ to stress that God uses our faith as the means or instrument through which

the power of God will flow into our lives. Just like electricity flows through wires and the power of the battery flows through the cables to the switch next to the steering wheel then on to the starter. In exactly the same way, God uses our faith as the means that the power passes through to give us the power of God to be guarded.

At first glance, it might appear that this is simply a statement that the more we trust God's promises the more power they will have to guard us. If this were the only passage in the Scriptures we might think that this is a possible translation, but that is not the case. The power of God is in heaven, just like electricity is generated at the dam, or the power of the car resides in the battery. The cable that connects us to this power is in heaven.

Types of Power in the Gospel

*For I am not ashamed of the **gospel**: for it is the **power (dunamis/dynamite)** of God unto salvation **to every one that believes**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom. 1:16*

dunamis ... "inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth" (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:1411)

Dynamite, gasoline, batteries, bombs. Power is within and can be accessed anywhere.

*And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message, even **the word of God**, you accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also **works (energeo – energize) in you that believe**. 1Th. 2:13*

energeo ... in work, operative, active. To be at work, to be effective, operative."

Energy – a general term for things that are operative or at work and functioning. Power can be inherent (within) or coming from outside.

Electricity, natural gas, but also batteries etc.

There is power in the Word of God, and our faith unlocks that power. It is not the faith, but the power in the word that contains the power. Faith is only the means that unlocks and opens it.

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:12-13

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. Isa 55:10-11

Thus portal to the power of God that will guard us is entered by the agency and means of our own faith. It is our faith in God's word that gives us access to this great power of God which keeps us safe so we can gain the inheritance that God is keeping safe for us in heaven. The mighty and omnipotent power of God resides in and operates through faith. The stronger the faith the greater the power, the less the faith, the less the power. God places such a great premium upon faith that our access to His omnipotent power is gained through it.

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. 1Thes 2:13

Paul explained to those in Thessalonica that it is our faith in the word of God that causes the effective working (energizing) of God's power. God's who so prepared the gospel that for those who believe have access to great power. The power is in the word and faith is like the dimmer switch that makes that power stronger and stronger in our heart. Peter simply expresses that God's power that keeps a Christian safe for the inheritance He is keeping for him is based upon his faith.

for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

The preposition (*eis* - denoting entrance or the end to which a thing is adapted to attain, the result or effect) is used to again stress the purpose of the power that keeps God's people safe. God exerts this power for the purpose of saving us. This is similar to what Paul told the Ephesians:

making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward (eis — purpose / result) us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, Eph. 1:15-21

God wants us to know how exceedingly great this power actually possesses. The basis and example of this power is what God used to raise Jesus from the dead. It is the power God used from the moment Jesus' soul and life returned to His body until the moment He was seated at God's right hand. That is the power is for our purpose in the gospel.

Peter now says something similar. This power will bring us to salvation just as God's power brought Jesus back to the right hand of God. If we put our full faith and trust in Him, He will exert that power in our behalf. We will never be tempted above what we are able to bear. God will always give a means to escape. God wants all men to be saved. His power is exerted to see to it that this is the case.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1Cor. 10:13

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. Rom. 8:28-30

Thus our salvation, which is completely tied to our faith, is also tied to God's power. Salvation is always placed against the background of ruin and destruction.

"sozo... to save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction (opp. to apollumi)... a. univ., tina ... one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing) e. g. one suffering from disease to make well, heal, restore to health: to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save (i.e. to rescue)... b. to save in the technical biblical sense; negatively, to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment,... to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance..." (Thayer, p. 610-611; 4982)

Being delivered out of a dangerous and precarious position of being lost and only one heartbeat away from eternal ruin and destruction is that which the Scriptures always mean when they speak of salvation.

Yet even in this respect they speak of salvation in two distinct ways. In Mk 16:16 Jesus speaks of salvation as something offered by God and received by man at the point where faith meets baptism. At that exact moment in time salvation is granted to the individual.

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mk. 16:15-16

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three

thousand souls were added to them. ... 47 And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. Acts 2:40-41

They are then saved and on their way to heaven. Salvation was granted at the moment of baptism. Yet that individual returns to his home with the same problems they had before they were baptized. They still get sick, they still suffer bereavement, they still can hunger and thirst, they can still be persecuted. Even greater in import than this is that through weakness and temptation they can even lose this salvation which God granted them on that day. Hence though the salvation is real and offered in God's own integrity, for reasons of his own God has these people remain in this life for a time.

This leads to the other use which the Scriptures make of salvation. It is the final reception of it. That day of joy and splendor; of glory and of honor. The day of resurrection, the day of judgement, the day when the new heavens and the new earth are revealed to the wondering eyes of the saved. This salvation is the present possession by faith of every believer. But it will not be revealed in its fullest splendor and glory until the distinction between being saved and lost is fully understood and comprehended.

5 who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 9 receiving the end of your faith, (even) the salvation of (your) souls. 1Pet. 1:5, 9

When the day come when the doomed and lost are cast screaming, gnashing their teeth; weeping in agony and pain into the eternal fires and we then turn to our own glorious home, then will salvation truly be revealed in the last time. Now it is a living hope, then it will be fully realized and experienced. Now it is the fire that keeps us warm when it grows cold through temptation and persecution, then it will be a living joy that can never be quenched.

The Power of God's Promises

Each time we start our car some of the power in the battery is drained. It would soon have none if not for a continuous recharging that begins the moment the engine starts. We rely on this system to start our car many times each day. A problem arises only if the battery is draining when the engine is not running. If a door is left open overnight or the lights or radio left on, we may find a battery drained and unable to start the car. It usually takes one experience of the inconvenience of a dead battery to learn this important lesson. We must protect the power of our battery by turning off anything that might drain it.

Have you ever heard someone who is older speaking about the seemingly inexhaustible energy of children. You can see it in an old dog who lies around and doesn't exert much energy and a younger one who never stops.

Have we also learned the spiritual counter lesson? Are we careful to protect the power we have gained from the gospel? God revealed that there are many different sources of power in his word. He also warns us that there are things that will drain this power from us and leave us empty. In our cars we have a volt meter or ammeter to tell us if the battery is charging or discharging. Have we developed a spiritual volt meter or ammeter to monitor our spiritual life and warn us if we are losing or gaining power?

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes (Rom 1:16) and energizes those who accept it as the word of God (1 Th 2:13).

For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom 1:16

And for this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted (it) not (as) the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe. 1Th 2:13

So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom 10:17

As the power of the rain to unlock the seeds growth, God's word generates power in our heart(Isa 55:10-11). Paul prayed that we would all see the great power that is working in us(Eph 1:16-21), for it is exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ask or think(Eph 3:20-21).

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. 12 For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Isa 55:10-12

having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might Eph 1:18-19

Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, 21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Eph 3:20-21

Sharper than any two edged sword(Heb 4:12), mighty to the casting down of strongholds(2Cor 10:3-5), strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might(Eph 6:10), and helping us to stand and minister in the strength which God supplies(1Pet 4:11).

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:12

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Eph 6:10-13

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Pet 4:11

From these and other Scriptures it is clear that there is great power available to each of us.

seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; 4 whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Pet 1:3-5

Yet just like the battery in our car needs the engine running to recharge, God warns us that there are things we need to do if we are to receive the strength he can supply. We are strengthened in prayer, reading the Bible, and attending classes and worship assemblies. When we do these things on a regular basis, we are not only recharging, but also gaining capacity for greater strength and a higher level of output. In this way our inner man is renewed and strengthened day by day(2 Cor 4:16-18). Those who do this find the strength to be faithful in their service to God year after year without wavering.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor 4:16-18

Yet we are also warned that there are things that can sap our strength leaving us weakened. In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains that the persecutions and tribulations that arise because of the word or even “temptations” (Lk 8:13) can sap so much strength from our heart that we can fall away (Mt 13:21).

But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. Luke 8:13-15

Perhaps more fearful for us today are those of us who are allowing thorns to block the power of the sun’s rays from keeping us strong. We must never forget that “*the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things*” (Mk 4:19), and the “*cares and riches and pleasures of (this) life.*” (Lk 8:14) can drain our strength and keep us from growing and remaining zealous. David found that sins we do not repent of can also sap our strength and leave us weak (Ps 32:1-5).

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him. Ps 32:1-6

Brethren we have to learn to monitor our spiritual strength. If we are truly waiting for Jehovah then there is an inexhaustible source of power and strength.

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. Isa 40:30-31

When we find ourselves weakening we have to identify the trouble. It may be that we are no longer recharging our faith and zeal. Perhaps our faith is wavering and the things God has designed are not working properly. Perhaps the cares & pleasures of this world have too strong a hold. Whatever it is, we can fix it and remain strong if we choose to do so. It is up to us how strong we want to be.

6 In this you greatly rejoice,

This phrase marks the transition from the description of the great hope God has given us to keep us warm and strong to the things this hope must get us through and the reasons this hope can do that. The term “in this” is literally “in the midst of these things” “by the assistance of these things,” “by the instrument or means of these things.”

“en... 1. of Place proper; a. in the interior of some whole; within the limits of some space... 5. used of that with which a person is surrounded, equipped, furnished, assisted, or acts... d. of the instrument or means by or with which anything is accomplished, owing to the influence of the Hebr. prep... much more common in the sacred writ. than in the prof... where we say with, *by means of, by (through)*...” (Thayer, p. 209-212; 1722)

“hos... I. a demonstrative pronoun, *this, that, ...* II a relative pronoun *who, which, what*; 9. Joined to a preposition it forms a periphrasis for a conjunction... II Th. 2:10; *for which reason, wherefore*...” (Thayer, p. 454-456; 3739)

Hence, looking back at the previous section, we see “*which things*” we are “*in the midst or*

interior of:”

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to **His abundant mercy** has **begotten us again** to a **living hope** through **the resurrection of Jesus Christ** from the dead, 4 to **an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled** and that **does not fade away**, **reserved (guarded and protected) in heaven** for you, 5 who are **kept by the power of God** through faith for **salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**. 6 **In this you greatly rejoice**, 1Pet. 1:3-6*

In This You Greatly Rejoice

His abundant mercy

begotten us again

a living hope

resurrection of Jesus

an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled

does not fade away

reserved (guarded and protected) in heaven

kept (guarded) by the power of God

salvation ready to be revealed in the last time When we know we are within the interior of these things, and possess the instrumentality of these things, we can't help but "*greatly rejoice*."

“agalliao to experience a state of great joy and gladness, often involving verbal expression and appropriate body movement - 'to be extremely joyful, to be overjoyed, to rejoice greatly.' ... 'my soul rejoices greatly because of God my Savior' Luke 1:47; ... 'my tongue rejoices' Acts 2:26...' (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon, NT:21)

agalliao "to exult, rejoice greatly," is chiefly used in the middle voice (active in Luke 1:47; some mss. have the passive in John 5:35, "to be made glad"). In the OT, it is found abundantly in the Psalms, from 2:11 onward to 149:2, 5 (Sept.). It conveys the idea of jubilant exultation, spiritual "gladness," Matt. 5:12, "be exceeding glad," the Lord's command to His disciples; Luke 1:47, in Mary's song; 10:21, of Christ's exultation ("rejoiced"); cf Acts 2:26, "(My tongue) was glad," KJV (RV, "rejoiced"); John 8:56, of Abraham; Acts 16:34, RV, "rejoiced greatly" (of the Philippian jailor); 1 Peter 1:6,8; 4:13 ("with exceeding joy"), ... (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:21)

As seen in the definition, this is not the common word for joy, but a superlative. Those disciples who have truly assimilated the information about the hope God has given to Christians are going to feel very powerful emotions. As they "*experience a state of great joy and gladness, often involving verbal expression and appropriate body movement.*" "*In the OT, it is found abundantly in the Psalms,*" "*conveys the idea of jubilant exultation, spiritual "gladness,"* Mt. 5:12,

Peter uses this term three times to express this jubilation and excitement.

*In this **you greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 1Pet. 1:6-7*

*whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, **you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory**, 1Pet. 1:8-9*

*but **rejoice** to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also **be glad with exceeding joy**. 1Pet. 4:13-14*

This is the sign of our faith! If we don't ever feel this joy and desire to sing, leap, praise and relish, then our faith is not strong enough for it to guard us. Nor is it strong enough to bring the power of God into our heart.

If we don't exult in what God is going to do for us after this life is over, and rejoice exceedingly over all God's promises both present and future, we have a faith problem. A short circuit that is stopping God's power from creating it. We have lost sight of or have not brought to completion the joy the Eunuch felt as he went on his way, and the joy in finding that treasure.

*Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way **rejoicing**. Acts 8:39-40*

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Mt. 13:44”

There is a natural progression for the Christian leading to this joy. If we do not progress we will be too shortsighted to see it anymore and will forget the cleansing of our old sins that created that joy in the first place.

*For he who lacks these things is **shortsighted, even to blindness**, and has **forgotten** that he was **cleansed from his old sins**. 2Pet. 1:9*

This is what happened to David and all of us when we sinned and refuse to repent. The joy of salvation is quenched and crushed.

***Restore to me the joy of Your salvation**, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners shall be converted to You. Ps. 51:12*

While when we first understand these things and the joy of salvation burns brightly in our heart, it is spontaneous and unsought. It just comes. Yet over the years, as the newness wears off, or the callouses of sin cause it to fade, we have to stoke the flames again. Depending upon our efforts, in stoking this fire it will either burn as hot as a bonfire or grown as cold as a smoking match just blown out. We make the difference here, it is our meditation, our study and contemplation which enlightenes the eyes of our heart so we can know it. It is the natural progression of a living and powerful faith, which comes by hearing, believing, trusting and building.

Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2Cor. 4:16-18

When we see like this, we can visualize the greater riches and reward and be motivated. Then, as Jesus as He faced the cross, we have a joy that will help us to endure whatever suffering comes.

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ **greater riches than the treasures in Egypt**; for he looked to the reward. Heb. 11:24-25*

*looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, **who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. 12:2*

Like all sacrifices, they are bitter and create great anguish and fear as we look at them in the future. Yet if we could look at them as we will when we are in heaven and have these sacrifices to remember as we save heaven, we will keep things in the right perspective. Those brethren who received this letter have been rejoicing for almost 2000 years because they allowed this hope and the power it can generate to keep them faithful until they could receive it. Yet Peter does not minimize the grief and sorrow that comes as we are first presented with them as future events:

though now for a little while,

The adverb “though now” presents an interesting concept in Greek, that is not as easily seen in English. It’s primary meaning is “*co – incidence*” which I have hyphanated since the word “*coincidence*” today has a very different meaning. This is an incident that closely follows another so it is a “*co - incident*.” It denotes “strictly present time” either moving from the past to the present or from the present to the future.

arti expressing “coincidence,” and denoting “strictly present time,” signifies “just now, this moment,”

in contrast (a) to the past, ... (b) to the future, (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:737)

"*arti* ... Adv. just, exactly, 1. of the present, just now, even now, ... 2. of the past, just now, just... 3 in late writers of the future, just now, presently, ..." (Liddell & Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT 737)

So this can be an event that we are in the midst of now, at this exact moment, but not in the past. Or, as it is here, it is used in the sense of the present as it is moving toward the future. It hasn't occurred yet, but it is obvious that it is coming soon.

This does not violate Jesus command, because though it is in the future, it is the future as it is now dawning.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Mt 6:34

Yet, though it is like the cloud bringing rain you can see in the distance and coming directly toward us, it will only be for a "*little while*." When we consider the historical record of what Peter is describing here, the only way we can make sense of this is in the context of eternity.

Only in the context of eternity can Jesus death on the cross and the terrible indignities He suffered to be small, few and short. The same could be said of the Christians who would soon be swept up in the terrible persecutions Rome would unleash under Nero (54-68), Domician (81-96), Trajan (98-117). Foxes Book of Martyrs describes the terrible things these emperors did to Christians. Their deaths were cruel and often prolonged. Faced with the prospect of being burned alive, fighting the gladiators, or being sewn into animal skins to be killed by wild animals or dogs. Watching your wife and children friends and brethren die, only to be killed yourself unless you were willing to say "There is not king but Caesar." Yet the Holy Spirit sums up these things under the term: "*a little time*" "*short season*." or "*little while*."

"*oligos*... *little, small, few*, of number, multitude, quantity, or size: joined to nouns... of time, *short*: ... of degree or intensity, *light, slight*... *in brief, briefly*..." (Thayer, p. 443; 3641)

oligos... a relatively small quantity - 'little, small amount.' ... 'take a little wine to help your digestion' 1 Tim 5:23; 'he knows he has only a little time' Rev 12:12; ... *oligos* ... pertaining to a relatively brief extent of time - 'a little while, for a little while, a short time, brief, briefly.' 'you think you will make me a Christian in a short time' Acts 26:28. 'I have written you briefly' 1 Peter 5:12. (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3641)

Though this might be the longest "*little while*" one lives through in their lifetime, it must be kept in perspective. In the context of eternity it truly will be seen as a little while.

*For I consider that the **sufferings of this present time** are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom 8:18*

*For our **light affliction**, which is **but for a moment**, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, **18** while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are **temporary**, but the things which are not seen are **eternal**. 2 Cor. 4:17-18*

Clearly Paul went even further than Peter. Not only is for a short duration, but it is also "*light affliction*" only "*for a moment*" and once again, it is only "*temporary*." This too in the context of eternity. The "**light affliction**" compared to the "**eternal weight**." The "**temporary**" set against the "**eternal**."

But without being guarded by the power of God, multitudes have been unable to see it like this and have fallen.

if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

The need sometimes arises for God's people to go through trials in order that the will of God to be accomplished. When the hatred of the wicked passes a certain point, God must either destroy them, or God's people must endure their persecutions. When such times arise, God

often chooses to give the wicked the time they need to repent at the cost of His own servants safety and peace. Yet when this occurs, He is only asking of us what He did of our Lord and Savior. It should be no great thing for Him to ask us to endure such things because of the “need” to accomplish the same purpose and task of helping the lost that His Son did.

“DEI... *It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper, ... a. necessity lying in the nature of the case:... necessity brought on by circumstances or by the conduct of others toward us... c. necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end... d. a necessity of law and command, of duty, equity... l. e. necessity established by the counsel and decree of God...*” (Thayer, p. 126: 1163).

There are often reasons that make it necessary for God’s children to undergo trials. There are many examples in the Scriptures. We don’t know what Noah endured while the ark was being prepared, but for 120 years the need was there if there was any. Joseph was sold into slavery, thrown into prison and faced great difficulties, all to bring about God’s eternal purpose by bringing Israel into Egypt.

He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him. Ps. 105:17-19

Habakkuk and Jeremiah were righteous men born into the age where Israel needed to be taken into captivity. After Habakkuk had pointed out how unfair it was for a wicked nation to be destroyed by an even more wicked nation,

You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he? Hab 1:13

Yet God still made His decree known:

Then the Lord answered me and said: "Write the vision And make it plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. 3 For the vision is yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry. 4 "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith. Hab. 2:2-4

There are times when things seem so unfair and unjust, but the righteous must live by his faith. The Hebrew writer used this exact verse when describing to those Hebrews who were about to go through persecution that would ultimately lead to the destruction of Jerusalem.

For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Heb 10:36-39

Joseph	God’s overruling providence	Gen 45:5
Everyone	God’s chastening	Heb 12:
Habakkuk	The consequence of the evil of others.	Habakkuk
	Time and chance happening to all	Ecc 9:10
Job	A simple test of a mans fidelity.	Job
Abraham	A test of faithfulness	Gen 22

The need is not always individual in character and we must divorce from our minds that all trials and sufferings are sent by God to punish.

Yet regardless of the reason for them, when they come they will lead us to grief. The term chosen here is the a common and general term for pain, grief and sorrow.

“lupeo... to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief; to throw into sorrow... in a wider

sense, *to grieve, offend...* to make one uneasy, cause him a scruple... “ (Thayer, p. 383; 3076)

These problems would lead to pain creating sorrow and causing grief. Added to this is that there are a great variety to them. They were of different colors, different types and varieties.

“*poikilos ... many-colored, spotted, mottled, pied, dappled*, of leopards, fawns, Hom., etc. II. of robes, wrought in various colours, brodered, ... III. metaph. *changeful, various, diversified, manifold*, Aesch., Plat.;- (Liddell and Scott, Greek Lexicon. NT:4164)

With the term “various” having such a diversity of meaning, and the multitudes of members who are receiving this letter, it would appear that every type of trouble and trial, from persecution, to bereavement, from loss of job, to loss of health would be under consideration here. Even the term “trial has a very broad meaning.

“*peiras... an experiment, attempt, trial, proving...* a. univ. *trial proving...* b. spec. *the trial of man’s fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy...* also an *enticement to sin, temptation*, whether arising from the desires from outward circumstances... an internal temptation to sin, ... of the temptation by which the devil sought to divert Jesus the Messiah from his divine errant... of a condition of things , or a mental state, by which we are enticed... *adversity, affliction, trouble...* sent by God and serving to test or prove one’s faith, holiness, character... c. ‘*temptation*’ (I. e. *trial*) *of God by men*, I. e. rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves...”(Thayer, p. 499; 3986)

peirasmós masc. noun from *peirázō* (3985), to make trial of, try, tempt. Trial, temptation, a putting to the test, spoken of persons only. When God is the agent, *peirasmós* is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall. If it is the devil who tempts, then it is for the purpose of causing one to fall. (I) Generally, trial of one’s character (1Peter 4:12, “to try [or prove] you”). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:3986)

Like James 1:2-3, we are dealing with things that though some translations use both trial and temptation, there is a very clear distinction to be made. When God uses them they are never above what we are able to bear and are for the purpose of trying and proving. When Satan uses them, they are always for the purpose of leading one to fall and be destroyed.

Trials and the grief they bring come from many different types, sizes, colors and intensities of trials, yet they all prove a man’s fidelity, integrity, virtue and continence and lead us to growth and strength. Every kind of trouble adversity, and affliction can bring about greater fidelity and virtue.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. 4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. Jas. 1:2-3

7 that the genuineness of your faith,

Like all things that God is doing, there is a purpose, and the Greek adverb *hina* is often used to express that purpose.

“*hina...* I. An adverb of place,... a. *where; in what place*. b. *in what place; whither...* II a final conjunction(for from local direction, indicated by the adverb, the transition was easy to mental direction or intention) denoting purpose and end: *to the intent that; to the end that, in order that...* it is used 1. prop of the purpose or end;...” (Thayer, p. 302-304; 2443)

Thus there is another purpose and goal for all these things. Not only are we working with God and joining with Him in working out His eternal purpose as vessels of honor in His great house, but there is also a personal benefit that each of us will receive. Though we may never know or easily see why these trials are necessary, that is not important. Regardless of the manifold trial we are enduring, it will always result in showing “*genuineness.*”

dokimion... 1. *the proving...* 2. *that by which something is tried or proved, a test...* in Sept. of a crucible or furnace for smelting...” (Thayer, p. 155; 1383)

The stem word is *doke* "watching" ... *dokimos* ... as an adjective both of person and object thus denotes a. "tested in battle," "reliable," "trustworthy," b. "a man who is tested, significant, recognized, esteemed, worthy" ... or "an object which is tested, genuine or valuable" ... *dokimion* is the neuter of an adjective *dokimios* "tested," "genuine" In the substantive form, it has the same meaning as the older ... "means of testing," (Kittel TDWNT, NT:1383)

Since the basic meaning of this term is primarily testing and secondarily passing that test and being approved because we are tested. We have proven ourselves to be genuine and reliable. This is what God did to Abraham when He asked him to sacrifice Isaac.

Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Gen. 22:1-4

This test started with the command and Abraham's immediate submission, leaving the next morning and making all the preparations, but God still wanted more. He waited until the wood was laid, the son was bound, and Abraham had picked up the knife. It was not until that moment that the test was completed and God knew.

And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Gen. 22:10-12

God is doing similar things like this for all of us. There are many passages that reveal the same truth that Peter is describing here.

*I know also, my God, that You **test** the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. I Chr 29:17*

*The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD **tests** the hearts Pr 17:3*

*But, O LORD of hosts, you who judge righteously, **testing** the mind and the heart, let me see Your vengeance on them, for to You I have revealed my cause. Jer 11:20*

*I, the LORD, **search** the heart, I **test** the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. Jer 17:10*

*The LORD is in His holy temple, the LORD'S throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids **test** the sons of men. The LORD **tests** the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates. Ps 11:4-5*

When like Abraham, we have passed through whatever manifold trial, we have now been tested and our character is now proven. We now have a genuine faith and God knows us just as He knew Abraham.

Thus when trials and tribulations enter our lives they do the same thing to our faith that a furnace does to metal. Trials put faith to the ultimate test. They show its strength and its power in the life of the one who undergoes the trials. God tolerates these trials and temptation upon his saved family because in His wisdom He knows that what they produce is worth the pain and hurt which it gives them.

Just as a parent allows a child to go through a heartache in order to teach them wisdom and the ability to cope with the world while we are still around to hold them up, so also in Gods wisdom, we are allowed to suffer in order that what is valuable might come to the surface. Just like God, we as parents do not like to allow our children to go through such, but we recognize that in a sinful world they must learn to cope.

being much more precious than gold that perishes,

A proven faith is “*more precious*” than gold.

“polutimos (polus, much, time honor, value), very valuable, of great price...” (Thayer, p. 530; 4186)

When God sees a faith that has been proven and tested it is to Him of far greater value than gold is to us. The compound term above is used of the “pearl of great price,” that a man was willing to sell all that he had to gain and of the precious ointment that Mary used to anoint Jesus. It describes things that in man’s eyes are of far greater value than other things. So here, for God each of us who have this proven faith are more precious to God. The proven faith of one who has endured trials and adversities is more precious than gold. We need to recognize it as such and prize it as highly as God tells us here it is worth.

Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. 12 Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: Heb 12:11-14

The reason faith is more precious than gold is that the value of gold will perish, but the value of faith will pass through into eternity. This is another portion of the living hope than never ends.

In the day of judgment any gold we might have owned will have perished and forgotten. It will not pass the dissolving of the elements spoken of by Peter in his final letter (2Peter 3:8-12). God will have no further use for gold and neither will mankind. It will have fulfilled its purpose and all those who sought it so diligently will forget all about it. But the faith that has been proved to be genuine will be of the greatest value at that moment. We will be able to use it to inherit eternal life.

though it is tested by fire,

Faith is tested by the fires of trials and tribulations. That is the nature of life. What God wants us to understand is that tested faith results in something wonderful. The term “test” is defined:

“dokimazo... to try 1. to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not), as metals... 2. to recognize as genuine after examination, to approve, deem worthy.” (Thayer p. 154; 1381).

dokimazo ... to assay or test metals, to see if they be pure, ... II. of persons, to put to the test, make trial of, scrutinise, III. at Athens, to approve as fit for an office, and in Pass. to be approved as fit, Plat., etc.; 2. to examine and admit boys to the class of ... to the rights of manhood; and in Pass. to be so admitted, (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1381)

dokimazo ... to try to learn the genuineness of something by examination and testing, often through actual use - 'to test, to examine, to try to determine the genuineness of, testing.' 'I bought five pairs of oxen and am on my way to test them out' Luke 14:19; 'everyone should examine himself, and then eat the bread and drink from the cup' 1 Cor 11:28. 'being tested severely by the troubles' 2 Cor 8:2. 'the testing of your faith produces endurance' James 1:3. 'when your fathers tested and tried (me)' Heb 3:9. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:1381)

The three definitions above give the full scope of this term which is the verb form of the adjective “*genuineness*” above. It takes in the testing to prove something in genuine, as well as the tests at the end of each year to see if the child is ready to pass on to the next grade. It was also used of testing oxen before buying them, and the testing each of us should do before we take the Lord’s supper.

In the Old Testament silver was more common, so it was often used in a similar way.

The words of the Lord are pure words, Like silver tried in a furnace of earth, Purified seven times. 7 You shall keep them, O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation forever. Ps. 12:6-7

For You, O God, have tested us; You have refined us as silver is refined. 11 You brought us into the net; You laid affliction on our backs. 12 You have caused men to ride over our heads; We went

through fire and through water; But You brought us out to rich fulfillment. Ps. 66:10-12

Here it is gold that has been refined, yet even the purest gold cannot compare with the genuine faith of the Christian after it has been approved by passing through the fires of persecution and tribulation.

may be found to praise, honor, and glory

It is here that we find the reason that it is so very precious. Those who pass through their trials and remain faithful will receive praise, honor and glory. Paul spoke in a similar way in Romans. There he spoke of glory, honor, immortality and peace.

*who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good **seek for glory, honor, and immortality**; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but **glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God. Rom. 2:6-11*

“Praise” is one of the most coveted and enjoyed of all the things one can give to another. For a Christian to hear praise from God is worth far more than the highest price that would need to be paid. Praise is commendation and approbation,

epainos... approbation, commendation, praise...” (Thayer p 227; 1868)

It is the expression of pride and esteem offered to another for what they have been able to accomplish. We see this expressed by the Lord in one of the parables.

“His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’ Mt. 25:21

Yet not only will there be praise offered to those who endure to the very end whatever is laid upon them will also receive honor and glory. “Honor” is the high value one ascribes to something or someone. In this case, the value is great and God will make it known by showing that what they have done has pre-eminence.

*“time...(fr. *tio*, to estimate, honor,...)... (a valuing, rating)... 1. a valuing by which the price is fixed; hence *the price* itself: of the price paid or received for a person or thing bought or sold... 2. honor which belongs or is shown to one: the honor of one who outranks others, pre-eminence... veneration, ... deference, reverence...” (Thayer, p. 624; 5092).*

This is the same term Paul used when describing the type of vessel we are based on our efforts.

*But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for **honor** and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for **honor**, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2Tim. 2:20-21*

That the honor of the uses God makes of us in this life will be bestowed upon us in the life to come is an great blessing and something we should all be longing for.

The final term “glory” is actually a synonym to the other two. It refers to a good opinion concerning someone, then to the “praise” and “honor” given because of that opinion. It is obvious that the reason for this good opinion is the successful endurance of trials.

*“doxa,... I. opinion, judgment, view... II ... in the sacred writings always, good opinion concerning one, and as resulting from that, praise, honor, glory... to give or ascribe glory to God, why and how being evident in each case from the context: thus, by declaring one’s gratitude to God for a benefit received,... so as to honor God, to promote his glory... III As a translation of the Hebrew in a use foreign to Greek writings... *splendor, brightness*; 1. ...of the sun, moon, stars,... used of the heavenly brightness, by which God was conceived of as surrounded,... 2. *magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace*... 3. *majesty*; a. that which belongs to God; and b. the kingly majesty*

which belongs to him as the supreme ruler; ... 4, a most glorious condition, most exalted state;... b. the glorious condition of blessedness into which it is appointed and promised that true Christians shall enter after their Saviour's return from heaven... " (Thayer p 155-156; 1391)

That we will share in this praise, glory, and honor is a blessing beyond anything we could ever merit or deserve. Everything we have is a gift of grace from God. Yet God has promised to offer this to us if we can faithfully discharge our duties under the gospel of grace, mercy and forgiveness.

at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

This final point is important. It is the reason why this is a living hope. It comes to us either at the end of the age if we are still alive or it will come after our death! While everything else in this world and every other hope and dream will forever draw to a close at death or the second coming, this one single hope does not! This praise honor and glory comes after death. It comes at our Lord's return (second coming). Ponder the final conclusion Paul's makes about our resurrection.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58

8 whom having not seen you love.

Peter here gives these brethren and of course through them us as well a great compliment. They have never laid eyes on Jesus. Yet their faith has passed far beyond simple belief and conviction to feelings of *agapao* love for *him*. They feel loyalty, devotion, submission all combining into the powerful *agape* love that leads us to make every sacrifice He needs us to make for Him. Surely the remembrance of Thomas had not yet faded from his mind.

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jn 20:29

Just as God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son, and just as Jesus laid down his life for us as an act of great love, so now, we love Him and keep His commandments.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Jn. 3:16

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. Jn. 15:13-15

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Jn. 14:21

"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. Jn. 15:9-10

Though now you do not see Him,

There is an interesting parallel here between what Peter has said about our faith under trials and our faith in Jesus. They follow the same path. We do not see Jesus, but faith doesn't need to be able to see.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. Heb. 11:1-2

Of course it is this conviction that makes all the rest possible. As Jesus told Peter, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. 11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not

have life. 1Jn. 5:9-13

We walk by faith and not by sight (2Cor. 5:7). With all the evidence left by the Father, (Jn 20:30-31) they and we can walk as firmly in our convictions as if we had seen it with our own eyes. This is what they were presently doing, and God was commending them here through Peter.

yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

The conviction of their faith led them to the feelings of great joy which were the foundation of the power described above.

*who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6
In this you greatly rejoice, 1Pet. 1:5-6*

The joy that was described there now reaches the level where we can't even express how much joy we have.

aneklaeto ... (alpha privative and eklaleo unspeakable: 1 Peter 1:8 (to which words are inadequate). (Thayer's Greek Lexicon, NT:412

aneklaeto , adj. from the privative "a" (1), without, and eklaléce (1583), to utter. Unutterable, inexpressible (1 Peter 1:8). (Complete Word Study Dictionary, NT:412)

The joy simply passes the words needed to express it. It is too high, too great, and can't be fully expressed in words. Though we ought to try!

I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. 2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. Ps 9:1-2

*Sing praise to the Lord, you saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. 5
For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning. Ps 30:4-5*

Could Peter say this about me and all of us who are alive today? Do we have that depth of faith? Does our own belief in the joy, glory, honor, praise, and hope set before us lead to such feelings as Peter offers here. The term rejoice is the same term as used in verse 6. They were leaping for joy. The other terms are defined:

"chara... joy, gladness; ... b. by meton. the cause or occasion of joy..." (Thayer, p. 664-665; 5479)

"chara ... joy, delight" (akin to chairo, "to rejoice"), ..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:5479)

"chara... joy, gladness... b. by meton. the cause or occasion of joy..." (Thayer p 665)

They rejoiced! Peter rejoiced! They were filled with a joy so great, so powerful, so rich and so full that it was unspeakable. Words could not describe it. It is full of magnificent splendor and brightness. So awesomely bright and glorious that it could not be described.

9 receiving the end of your faith –

This is not the common word for receive. It's root meaning in the active voice is that of bearing or carrying something. When they used the middle voice (acting with personal interest or in reference to oneself), it takes on the idea of bearing or taking something from someone else into our own possession. As Vine notes, it is used most of the times of God's people receiving something from God to keep for themselves. Thus when we stand in judgment we will receive what was done in the body (good or bad). It is also used of receiving "*the promise*," "*the end result of our faith*," and "*a crown of glory*." These things are now in God's possession, but will be delivered to us and we will carry them away after the judgment.

komizo ... denotes "to bear, carry," e. g., Luke 7:37; in the middle voice, "to bear for oneself," hence (a) "to receive," Heb 10:36; 11:13 (in the best texts; some have *lambano*, No. 1), 39; 9; 5:4; in some texts in 2 Peter 2:13 (in the best mss. *adikeomai*, "suffering wrong," RV); (b) "to receive back, recover," Matt 25:27; Heb 11:19; metaphorically, of requital, 2 Cor 5:10; Col 3:25, of "receiving back again" by the believer at the judgment seat of Christ hereafter, for wrong done in this life Eph. 6:8, of "receiving," on the same occasion, "whatsoever good thing each one doeth,..." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:2865)

What we are to receive is the "end" of our faith. This is a very comprehensive term for the end, limit or purpose. In its use here, it carries the idea of the termination, goal or purpose of our faith. We have a faith that is going to cost us many things. The persecutions and trials of this life, along with the sacrifices we must make to serve God properly, and the battles we fight to destroy the lusts we grew to love before we gained this faith, are all borne so we can reach this termination and end. This is the destination, purpose and end result of our faith.

"*telos*,... 1. *end*, i.e. a. *termination*, *the limit* at which a thing ceases to be... b. *the end* i.e. *the last in any succession or series*... c. *that by which a thing is finished, its close, issue*... d... *the end to which all things relate, the aim, purpose* | Tim. 1:5..." (Thayer, p. 619-620; 5056)

"*telos* ... the fulfilment or completion of anything, Lat. *effectus*, i.e. its consummation, issue, result, end, ... its issue, ... to put a finish to a thing, i.e. give it effect, ... one's prayers are accomplished, ... to have reached the end, to be finished or ready, ... II. the end proposed, chief matter, ... 2. the end of action, , the chief good, Cicero's *finis bonorum*, ... 3. perfection, full age, ... man's full age, manhood, ... to be grown up, ... 4. a final decision, determination, ... 5. the prize at games, Pind. ..." (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:5056)

– the salvation of your souls.

There are so many different figures and images to describe this salvation In figures, this is the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price. It is why "*to die is gain*," and to "*depart and be with Christ is very far better*." It is *the resurrection from the dead* and the *second coming of Christ*. It is the *completed judgment with the verdict of "well done good and faithful servant"*. It is the *glory that can't be compared to the sufferings*, "*seeing Him as He is and being like him as He conforms our lowly body to His glorious body*." It is the *victory that overcomes the world*, and the *new heavens and new earth where righteousness dwells*. (Rom 8: These promises are enough to cause one to be in awe of what a great day the revelation of Jesus Christ will be when we really understand exactly what we will receive. The more we understand about this, the greater joy and excitement we will have and the more ability we will have to prepare for it. The completion of our faith is not to be found in the fringe benefits that some Christians feel are so important. We may or may not in the providence of God gain a happier life here. Not always will our faith bring enhancements to this life. It can and often does if other factors do not intervene, but just as our faith has the potential to make our lives here so much richer, it also has the same potential to destroy it. The only real factor are the times we live in and the tolerance of the wicked. But whatever it might lead to here, its main goal is the salvation of our souls.

you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory

Even though now for a little while, if the need arises

You have been grieved by various trials,

So that proven genuineness of your faith, much more precious than gold

May be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully,

The amazing nature of these promises are not only enough to motivate and make us excited, but they did the same thing for the prophets who wrote the Old Testament Scriptures. This builds on James words:

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord— that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. Jas. 5:10-11

Peter now explains one of the reasons why they endured. They saw dimly, through their prophecies, the same salvation that we have now received.

The preposition “of” is “*peri*” from which we get perimeter, or periscope. It takes salvation and places it into their “circle of concern.” Everything within the circle of salvation is what their interest and attention revolves around.

“peri... prep., joined in the N. T. with the gen. and the acc. ... and indicating that the person or thing relative to which an act or state is predicated is as it were encompassed by this act or state; Lat. circum, circa; around, about... I. with the GENITIVE it denotes that around which an act or state revolves; about, concerning, as touching, etc... a. about concerning... after verbs of speaking, teaching, writing, etc. ...after verbs of hearing knowing, ascertaining,... after verbs of thinking, deciding, supposing, doubting, etc. ... b. as respects [A. V. often (as) touching]... with regard to, in reference to... gg. at the beginning of sentences, concerning, as to... “ (Thayer, p. 502; 4012)

This was the perimeter in which the prophets sought and searched and inquired diligently about. They were very interested in this salvation. Partly because it was their salvation too, partly because it is an intensely interesting subject. The OT prophets sought and searched about these things. Jesus spoke of this also.

“But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Mt 13:16-17

Although they didn’t see all of it, they were very concerned and interested in it and they remained laser focused on it.

It is important not to pass over the term “*this*” salvation. It is a relative pronoun that always refers

back to the previous verb, substantive (noun) or preposition. In this case, the Holy Spirit wants it clearly understood that the salvation here is the same salvation we enjoy.

hos, he, ho... II. a relative pronoun *who, which, what*; 1. in the common construction, according to which the relative agrees as respects its gender with the noun or pronoun which is its antecedent, but as respects case is governed by its own verb, or by a substantive, or by a preposition: . . . a. refers to nouns of the masculine and the feminine gender, and to plurals, when *that which* is denoted by these nouns is regarded as a thing...” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, 454-456 3739)

hos, he, ho... a relative reference to any entity, event, or state, either occurring overtly in the immediate context or clearly implied in the discourse or setting - 'who, which, what, the one who, that which.' 'the star which they saw' Matt 2:9; ; 'and who is this concerning whom I heard these things?' Luke 9:9...” (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:3739)

“*This salvation*” is “*the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.*” This is the subject of what they were inquiring and searching carefully. These are terms made more intensive by the preposition that is placed before it. It’s root is to seek and search, but with “out” placed in front of it, it is intensified as searching diligently and leaving no stone unturned, seeking in order to find or obtain it.

ekzeteo contracted *ekzeto* ... from *ek* (1537), out, or an intensive and *zetéœ* ... (2212), to see, to seek out, search diligently for anything lost (Sept.: Ezek 34:10,11,12). In the NT used metaphorically, to seek in order to obtain (Heb 12:17; Sept.: 1 Kings 14:5; Ps 122:9; Mic 6:8) or know (1 Peter 1:10; Sept.: Ps 44:21). To seek diligently or earnestly after, namely God, with a sincere and earnest desire to obtain His favor (Acts 15:17; Rom 3:11; Heb 11:6. (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT:1567)

ekzeteo ... to exert considerable effort and care in learning something - 'to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.' 'so all other people will seek the Lord' Acts 15:17. 'it was concerning this salvation that the prophets made a careful search and investigation' 1 Peter 1:10. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT: 1567)

The effort made is “*to exert effort and care in learning something*” and “*to make a careful search, to seek diligently to learn, to make an examination.*” This was not a casual search, but an intensive one as set forth in Hebrews:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Heb 11:6

Added to this intensive and extensive search, is a synonym that means the same thing. This time it is a search like a dog sniffing out food, police investigating a robbery, or investigate any matter in the legal sense. Again, the intensive “out” is added. In this way, God searches the heart, the Spirit searches the deep things of God, and the prophets searched and sought diligently. This is investigation searching, examining, and seeking out.

ereunao, exereunao, ... The general meaning of *ereunao* is to "search after," both literally and figurative It is first used a. of animals in the sense of "to sniff out" with the nose, It is then used b. of men in the sense of "to search" (esp. of houses or possessions, e.g., Aristot. Oec., II, p. 1351 b, 27), ... sometimes synonymous with *phoran* in the sense of investigating a robbery (Plat. Leg., XII, 954 b). It then comes to mean c. "to investigate a matter," esp. in the legal sense, though also in the more general sense of enquiry In the LXX we find both *ereunao* and *exereunao* ... in the various senses ... "to investigate," "to search," or "to seek out" (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:2045)

(1) *eraunao* or *ereunao*, ... "to search, examine," is used (a) of God, as "searching" the heart, Rom 8:27; (b) of Christ, similarly, Rev 2:23; (c) of the Holy Spirit, as "searching" all things, 1 Cor 2:10, acting in the spirit of the believer; (d) of the OT prophets, as "searching" their own writings concerning matters foretold of Christ, testified by the Spirit of Christ in them, 1Pet 1:11 (cf. No. 2); (e) of the Jews, as commanded by the Lord to "search" the Scriptures, John 5:39,

exeraunao a strengthened form of No. 1 (*ek*, or *ex*, "out"), "to search out," is used in 1 Peter 1:10, "sought diligently"; (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:1830)

These words are used by the Holy Spirit to reveal the extent and strength of the prophets emotions and desires to understand. They sought out from every angle, they investigated and scrutinized. They searched out anxiously and diligently, they pondered and meditated over it. They wanted to understand what it was they were proclaiming.

This also gives us an indication of the limitations of inspiration. The Scriptures are clear that inspiration gave them the ability to preach it in a perfectly accurate manner.

"no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." 2Pet. 1:21

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Cor. 2:12-14

how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), Eph. 3:3-5

From the mind of the Spirit to the mind, mouth and hand of man is perfectly guided with no input from man's mind. But though by reading we can get Paul's and their understanding, that is as far as it went. They had no more insight into what it meant than we do when we read it. The could preach it perfectly, write it perfectly, but then they had to seek and search to understand. it did not give them any greater insight into its meaning. They had the same responsibilities to learn, comprehend and master it as those to whom they were preaching.

who prophesied

While only a minor role in their day, the Messianic prophecies have taken center stage after the Law was done away and the nations they had prophesied against had all been destroyed just as God had revealed. Most of the work of the prophets is described by the Holy Spirit:

In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away. Heb 8:13

Overnight the vast majority of the writings of these prophets became obsolete, and that system is ready to vanish away. The New Testament has a lot to say about the purpose now for these writings.

<i>Written for our Learning. <u>Rom. 15:4</u></i>	<i>Make the Man of God Complete <u>2Tim. 3:15-18</u></i>
<i>Written for our Admonition <u>1Cor. 10:11</u>;</i>	<i>A Great Cloud of Witnesses <u>Heb. 11-12</u></i>
<i>Make us wise to Salvation <u>2Tim. 3:15-18</u></i>	<i>Do Well to Take Heed. <u>2Pet.19-20</u></i>

But if we do not allow the vast majority of that law to vanish away, we are in danger:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised that he is a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Gal 5:1-5

Much of the writings of Moses and the prophets are no longer compatible with the teachings of Christ. If we seek to continue to using them, we will become "severed from Christ" and "fallen from grace."

But the single most important element of the writings of the prophets today are those obscure passages that the prophets were focused on, yet never understood. The Messianic Prophecies.

As one considers these prophets, they quickly see that their primary duty was to the people of their own generation. They were raised up to condemn the evil things that were being done.

They were striving to get the people of their day to repent. Yet God had given them another duty, one which they enjoyed yet evidently gave them great perplexity. They were given from time to time small selected pieces of information about the future. Abraham was told that not only would he be blessed in having a nation, but at some time in the future, all nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed. How many prophets sought and searched for the meaning of that verse? Moses spoke of another lawgiver like him, how many sought and searched and pondered that verse. Why would they need another lawgiver? Then Jeremiah answered that question when he spoke of a new law and covenant that would replace the old. Yet that too created more questions as the sought and searched to determine more.

David spoke many things about this one that was to come and the kingdom he would establish. With the coming of Isaiah, great, specific, yet seemingly contradictory things were spoken. How he must have pondered and wondered at the things he revealed. The prophets main duty they understood well, to gain the repentance of an evil people, yet their minds went out to the times in the far distance future as they meditated upon their own prophecies concerning this future.

of the grace that would come to you,

The Holy Spirit sums up all these Messianic prophecies with the phrase "*the grace that would come to you.*" Clearly these prophecies had nothing to do with the law that was done away at the cross, or the needs of the people in the day they were prophesying. They were speaking about the salvation and the grace that would be given to those under the New Covenant and under the authority of Christ. The "*grace that should come unto you*" is a synonym for the salvation Peter described in the first few verses.

11 searching what, or what manner of time,

Peter continues this theme by explaining exactly both the how and the what that they inquired and searched so diligently to know and understand. It is fascinating that the Holy Spirit would give us such insight into the minds of these men. No where else in the Bible do we have such information offered. The meditations of the prophets often went to that period of time they were speaking of. Peter repeats the word from the previous verse without adding the intensive "*ek - out*" Yet, even without this intensifier, they were still "searching" in the sense of "*sniffing out,*" "*searching in a legal sense.*" They did everything in their power "*to investigate,*" "*search*" and "*seek out*" everything they possibly could:

ereunao, exereunao, ... The general meaning of *ereunao* is to "**search after,**" both literally and figurative ... a. **of animals** in the sense of "**to sniff out**" **with the nose**, b. **of men** in the sense of "**to search**" ... **in the sense of investigating a robbery** ... It then comes to mean c. "**to investigate a matter,**" **esp. in the legal sense**, though also in the more general sense of enquiry "**to investigate,**" "**to search,**" or "**to seek out**" (Kittel, TDWNT; NT:2045)

Since everything revolved around "time" we will seek to fully understand it first.

Normally, when we think of time we think of duration. That is what the term *chronos* was generally used for: "A length of time or extent of time." That is not the word that is used here. This term emphasizes a time of opportunity or a proper time. It is well captured in the book of Ecclesiastes:

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: 2 a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; Ecc1 3:1-2

These prophets were considering a time very different from their own. The season in which all the things they were prophesying about would occur.

kairos... III. of Time, the right point of time, the proper time or season of action, the exact or critical time, Lat. *opportunitas*, ... to be in season, ... 2. adverbial usages, ... in season, at the right time, opportune, ... IV. advantage, profit, fruit, ... (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:2540)

"kairos..." 2. *a measure of time;* a larger or smaller portion of time; hence a. univ. *a fixed and definite*

time:... b. *opportune or seasonable time*... c. the right time... d. a (limited) *period of time*... e. as often in Grk. writ., ... is equiv. to what time brings, the state of the times, the things and events of time..." (Thayer, p. 318-319; 2540)

chronos [5550], *kairos* [2540]. ... Several times in the N. T. but always in the plural, *chronoi* and *kairoi* are found together (Acts 1:7; 1 Thess 5:1); ... *chronos* is time, contemplated simply as such; the succession of moments (Matt 25:19; Rev 10:6; Heb 4:7); ... *kairos*, derived from *keiro*, as 'tempus' from 'tempo,' is time as it brings forth its several births; thus *kairos* ... (Matt 13:30); (Mark 11:13); Christ died *kata kairon* (Rom 5:6); and above all compare, as constituting a miniature essay on the word, Eccl 3:1-8: ... *chronos*, it will thus appear, embraces all possible *kairoi*, and, being the larger, more inclusive term, may be often used where *kairos* would have been equally suitable, though not the converse; ... *xronou* (Gal 4:4), the fulness, or the ripeness, of the time for the manifestation of the Son of God, where we should before have rather expected *kairos* ... From what has been said, it will appear that when the Apostles ask the Lord, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" and He makes answer, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons" (Acts 1:6,7), 'the times' (*chronoi*) are, in Augustine's words, 'ipsa spatia temporum,' and these contemplated merely under the aspect of their duration, over which the Church's history should extend; but 'the seasons' (*kairoi*) are the joints or articulations in these times, the critical epoch-making periods fore-ordained of God (*kairoi protetagmenoi*, Acts 17:26; ... when all that has been slowly, and often without observation, ripening through long ages is mature and comes to the birth in grand decisive events, which constitute at once the close of one period and the commencement of another. Such, for example, was the passing away with a great noise of the old Jewish dispensation; (Trench's Synonyms of the NT)

The NASB actually uses *times* and *epochs*. An epoch is a period of time within time where momentous things happen. Daniel captured this well, as did Jesus and Paul. God holds both in His hands. Daniel places into the concepts of epochs the removal of kings and establishment of kings.

*Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 "And it is **He who changes the times and the epochs**; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. Dan 2:20-22*

*"Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, **"It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; Acts 1:6-8***

***Now as to the times and the epochs**, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 1Th. 5:1-2*

We don't know anything about either. But the prophets revealed much about the epoch that was by them called "*the last days*." This was the moment in time that God selected that would become this pivotal moment. It was this epoch or season that the prophets were focused upon.

Their thoughts, meditations and inquiries about this epoch and season revolved around two things. The first is described as the "*what*" of this season. Though it is a single word in English it is actually a preposition and "*what*" in Greek (*eis tina*). Literally "*into what season*" "*entrance into what epoch*," "*purpose of what time*," "*intent of what portion of time*" Clearly, the preposition bends the "*what*" into purpose, entrance, intent.

"*eis*,... a Prep. governing the Accusative, and denoting **entrance into**, or **direction** and **limit**: *into, to, towards, for, among*. It is used II. *eis* after words indicating motion or direction or end; 3. it denotes the **end**; and a. the end to which a thing reaches or extends, i.e. **measure** or **degree**... b. the end which a thing is adapted to attain... c. the end which one has in view, i.e. **object, purpose**;... d. the end by which a thing is completed, i.e. **the result or effect**... (Thayer, p. 183-186; 1519).

So these prophets were first of all searching and inquiring diligently into the the means of entrance, the purpose and intent of this time. What purpose and intent did this time signify. What

would result from it, what would be the outcome? Second, the Spirit speaks of their search into the “*manner*” of time.

“*poios...* "of what sort," is translated "by what manner of (death)" in John 21:19, RV, (KJV, "by what"); in Acts 7:49, "what manner of (house)"; Rom 3:27, "what manner of law"; 1 Cor 15:35, "what manner of body." (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4169)

“*poios...* interrogative pron. corresponding to *hoíos* (3634), such as, of what sort, which kind, and *toíos*, such as. What, of what kind or sort. (I) Particularly (Mark 4:30; Luke 6:33,34; 24:19; John 12:33; 18:32; 21:19; Acts 7:49; Rom 3:27; 1 Cor 15:35; James 4:14; 1 Peter 1:11; 2:20). (Word Study Dictionary: NT:4169)

It is clear that these two terms sum up about everything one could think of about this period of time that would begin after Jesus died and the kingdom and new covenant were established.

What kind, intent, purpose, manner, sort and nature would this epoch or season be like? They had revealed that the Old Law was going to end, and that a new lawgiver was going to come. They had revealed that he would be shepherd who as king and priest would sit on David's throne. They had revealed that each man would be under his vine and fig tree, that the tabernacle of David would be rebuilt. But they did not know what it all signified.

They didn't know when. Could it possibly happen before I die? Will my children see it? Is it going to come within the next hundred years? They would ponder this. Then when they had exhausted this line of reasoning with whatever conclusion they had come to, they would also meditate upon the kind or quality of time that such a thing might occur in. What kind of a world will that be? What kind of people will dwell in it? How will the relationship with God have changed when such forgiveness and blessings are freely available to all?

We are doing exactly the same thing with the second coming of Christ and the glories that will follow it. So it isn't hard to imagine what they were doing. What is interesting that some day, we will be in that kingdom and we will be looking back just as they are now to see just how far off they really were.

the Spirit of Christ who was in them

Many questions have arisen over this construction here. Is this Christ revealing things to the prophets of the Old Covenant? Or is this the Holy Spirit given another title? In Rom 8:9 and Gen. 1:2, the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of God.

*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And **the Spirit of God** was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then **God** said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. Gen. 1:2-4*

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed **the Spirit of God** dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have **the Spirit of Christ**, he is not His. 10 And if **Christ** is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the **Spirit of Him** who raised **Jesus** from the dead dwells in you, He who raised **Christ** from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through **His Spirit** who dwells in you. Rom 8:9-11*

In these two places there can be little doubt that it refers the third person of the Godhead even though it refers to him as The Spirit of God. We also see them all present at Jesus baptism, and again in our baptism.

*When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that **Jesus** also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the **Holy Spirit** descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a **voice came from heaven** which said, "**You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.**" Lk. 3:21-22*

*And **Jesus** came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to **Me** in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Mt. 28:18-20*

In Gal 4:6 He is called the Spirit of His Son, which again can not successfully be argued against as its parallel passage in Rom 8:9 calls him the Spirit of God.

God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Gal. 4:4-7

Thus in the above it is evident that the Holy Spirit is given names which tie Him to the other God the Father and Jesus the Son. Does this distinction continue here? Is "Spirit of Christ" also the Holy Spirit here. It is a conclusion that is strongly favored, but still cannot be stated with certainty, because this is part of God's ways that are not man's ways, and the secret things belong to God.

The strongest support is due to the fact that the Holy Spirit is the one who is consistently given the role of revealing God's word. In the role of revealing truth, the Holy Spirit is primarily involved.

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. John 14:26

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. John 15:26

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. John 16:12-13

Note that He is sent both by the Father (14:26) and Jesus (15:26). Jesus revealed clearly that it would be the Holy Spirit who would complete their training and education, but that the Father would be sending the Spirit in His name, and that He would be sending the Spirit. For these reasons, it seems best to understand the "Spirit of Christ" here in the same way the we understand the "Spirit of God," although either way it works out to the same point. These prophets were inspired.

was indicating when He testified beforehand

There are two separate thoughts here attributed to the Spirit of Christ. First, He was "indicating" these things to the prophets. This is a term often used to "to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand." The Spirit in His revelations, sought "to make evident, plain or clear," "to show," "to declare," "to impart," "to demonstrate" these truths.

deloo ... a: to make something known by making evident what was either unknown before or what may have been difficult to understand - 'to make known, to make plain, to reveal.' 'the day will make it clearly known' 1 Cor 3:13; (Lou & Nida, Greek-English Lexicon NT:1213

deloo, deloun is common in Gk. (and the papyri) for "to make evident, plain or clear," "to show," "to declare," "to impart," "to demonstrate." In Jewish and Christian writings it is first used in the ordinary secular sense of "to indicate," "to impart," e.g., Josh 4:7; ... In arguments we often find the phrase delon hoti 1 Cor 15:27; Gal 3:11; 1 Tim 6:7 similarly we have delon poiein (Mt. 26:73), "to make evident," ... In the NT deloun is less common than apokaluptein and phaneroun, which are used especially for the active and above all the eschatological revelation of God, whether still future or fulfilled and being fulfilled in Christ and the Gospel. deloun is used for the (future) divine act of revelation only in 1 Cor 3:13: ... deloun is more commonly used for the instruction given by the divine pneuma (whether in the oldtime prophets, 1 Peter 1:11 or in the Scriptures, Heb 9:8; 12:21; (kittel TDWNT, NT:1213)

The Spirit was also "testifying beforehand." This is the only time in the New Testament this word is used. It is a compound word made up of the root *maturoo* testify or witness (we get *martyr* from it). To the root is added the preposition before. So it simply means to testify and bear

witness before it happened. This is the power only the Godhead possesses.

promarturomai pró (4253), before, and *martúromai* (3143), to witness. To witness or testify or declare beforehand (1 Peter 1:11). (Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT 4303)

While the Holy Spirit was making things known and testifying beforehand, they were searching and inquiring diligently seeking to understand it. Since they were revealing things which they could not fully understand, it is obvious and presents a powerful testimony that they had no real control over what they were writing. It was not their own wisdom. Their own revelations became their meditations in the night. It is interesting to consider that even with inspiration, they had to go home and do the same things with their writings which we have to do today.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:19-21

The Spirit of Christ was in them, and he was indicating something. As noted above, “*deloo*” describes something that is being “made known” or “declared.” The Spirit of Christ “gave them to understand.” While testifying beforehand is a single Greek term meaning “to make known by prediction.” Thus the Holy Spirit indicated and made known by prediction, and they sought and searched to figure out what He meant. Again, inspiration only revealed truth, it did not convey to the inspired man any better ability of understanding it, than we have today.

“*Testifying beforehand*” is an important foundation for what follows. These were testimonies and witnesses that had nothing to do with the times these men were living. Throughout the book of Acts, these scriptures formed the heart of the gospel. They testified to the death, burial and resurrection of the Christ, and the apostles used them powerfully.

While testimony after events happen is the only quality of testimony which the courts of our land will accept today. It is evident that God’s testimony was just as accurate though given 100’s or 1,000’s of years before. The power of this testimony being 100% accurate should be very powerful to each of us. What Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others did, is not possible for mere men to do.

Therefore the testimony of David, many centuries old was just as powerful for the Jews in that first sermon as the testimony of the apostles who were eyewitnesses. Only the time frame was different. Peter did it after and they did it before. It strengthens the faith of all when they look at it in this way.

the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

The sufferings of the anointed Messiah is one of the clearest yet most confusing aspect of Old Testament prophecy. Beginning with Genesis 3:15 which revealed that his heel would be bruised and continuing through to its highest degree of specifics in Isaiah 53, the suffering Messiah is spoken of. Many of the Psalms speak of His suffering, beatings, and scorn. There must have been great confusion in the minds of these prophets, when at one moment they spoke of the Messiah of His great dignity and stature and the next moment spoke of His death. He was to be Immanuel (God is with us) Isa. 7:14. He was “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace”, and He was to sit on the throne of David for time without end. Isa 9:6-7. Imagine the difficulty Isaiah had trying to harmonize what he had revealed in these passages with what was said in Isa. 52-53. He will suffer a horrible death and God will be pleased to see it, yet he is to be Deity and dwell on the throne forever. Truly they must have sought and searched diligently!

The glories which would follow them includes the eternal kingdom which would become a mighty mountain (Dan. 2:44) into which all nations would flow (Isa. 2:2-4) which would have a divine king (Isa. 9:6-7), who would have the spirit of Jehovah resting upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah (Isa.

11:1-2).

In this kingdom the wolf will dwell with the lamb Isa 11:6-9; and the fallen tabernacle of David would be rebuilt, where the plowman would overtake the reaper, and the captivity of the people would be brought back. (Amos 9:11-14). A time when the swords would be beaten into plow shears and the spears pruning hooks. Mic. 4:1-4. On and on the glorious prophecies of the glorious period of time following the sufferings of Christ.

One of the interesting side points of this is all of these Old Testament prophecies must now be incorporated into the New Testament doctrine. The apostles did this for us in all the quotations they made in their letters and sermons. But now we learn that all the things God promised to His people in prophecy is also written for us. It is testimony beforehand, given to clarify and reveal many different things. Consider as one example the promises in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that there would be good shepherds to guide the flock (Jer 23:1-6; Ezek 34), when the seed of David took His throne again (Jesus). It is therefore the duty of men today who qualify and are appointed as elders and shepherds to fulfill these promises God gave to His people.

12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves,

While they were seeking and searching diligently, the revelations continued and it became quite apparent that this was not going to happen in their lifetime. It was going to happen so far in the future that it could not really have any bearing upon them at all except for the comfort it gave to them that such a time was coming for others. It became evident to their minds that the purpose of these revelations had to do with those who would follow after them.

The Spirit at some point revealed this to them. It too had been hidden, and at the right moment, it too was revealed to them. We are not told how this was done. It is evident that there are some things that the Holy Spirit revealed to them that were not recorded in the written text. There is no such verse in the Old Testament. But it was “*revealed*” to them.

“apokalupto... 1. prop. to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; to disclose, make bare:... 2. Metaph. to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown; a. pass. of any method whatever by which something before unknown becomes evident... e. of persons, previously concealed, making their appearance in public... “ (Thayer, p. 62; 601)

The Holy Spirit revealed this (perhaps to each of them). This much He did reveal. He uncovered and made it bare. He determined “*to make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown*” that the purpose of these revelations was not for them. The term “that” is often used to identify and explain exactly what it was that was revealed: “that, namely, that is, namely that.” What was revealed to them is summed up by this term. It is the substance and content of the revelation, though it may not have been worded exactly that way to each of them this was the gist and essence of the revelation.

hoti ... markers of identificational and explanatory clauses - 'that, namely, that is, namely that.' ... 'this is the judgment, namely, that the light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light' John 3:19; 'this is the witness; namely, that God has given us eternal life' 1 John 5:11. 'no one has greater love than this; namely, that he gives his life on behalf of his friends' John 15:13; (Lou & Nida (Greek-English Lexicon NT:3754

“hoti... I. the substance or contents (of a statement), that, 1. joined to verbs of saying and declaring... II the reason why anything is said to be or to be done, because, since, for that, for, (a causal conjunct. ...)... a. it is added to a speaker's words to show what ground he gives for his opinion;... b. hoti makes reference to some word or words that precede or immediately follow it...” (Thayer p 458-460; 3754)

By putting “*themselves*” in the dative case, it is clearly understood by Greek readers that this had nothing to do with their interests. It was not for them, not for their benefit. This portion of Scripture had nothing to do with that age. It was not for them or for those they were preaching to. The portion of Scripture we call Messianic prophecy, that the apostles used to prove the gospel were not for them in any way. They are more New Testament doctrine than Old

Testament and were therefore not done away at the cross. “Do we allow this labor expended by these prophets to have an affect on our daily life?

but to us they were ministering

All the work they were doing in prophesying for the future was not for them nor for the people of that day. With the adversative conjunctive particle, He explains their true purpose. It gives the true purpose placed against what these prophets had hoped. The reality was that it had not been revealed for them. The “but” is “adversative, distinctive, disjunctive, used to make a distinction.

“*de* ... but: **conjunctive Particle**, with adversative force: it commonly answers to “*mein*” and may often be rendered by *while, whereas, on the other hand*, v. -but *mein* is often omitted, *de* being used merely to pass on from one thing to another.” (Liddell and Scott Abridged Greek Lexicon. NT:1161)

“*de*... a particle adversative, distinctive, disjunctive, *but, moreover*... used 1. univ. by way of opposition and distinction; it is added to statements opposite to a preceding statement...” (Thayer, p. 126; 1161)

Instead of these Messianic prophesies being for the prophets who revealed them or the people they revealed them to, the exact opposite is they were not for them at all but for us. By repeating the dative case, He presents that it is in our personal interests that these things were revealed. They were “*ministering*” to us. This is a very special type of ministry. This is the service that Jesus sought to reveal to his apostles that would make them “*great*” in the kingdom of heaven. It is a personal service like serving tables. Thus the OT prophets were serving us in a very personal way by giving these prophesies. Though we had not yet been born, this was a great service they had done for us.

The original frame of reference for the use of the entire word group of the *diakon-* stem in secular Greek was that of **table service**. The basic meaning of the verb, correspondingly, was **wait on tables**. (Exegetical Dictionary NT)

In secular Gk. *diakoneo*, which is first found in Herodotus and is never too common, means a. “**to wait at table**”: ... In Greek eyes serving is not very dignified. Ruling and not serving is proper to a man... The formula of the sophist: “How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?” expresses the basic Greek attitude (Kittel TDWNT NT:1247)

“*diakoneo*... *to be a servant, attendant, domestic; to serve, wait upon; ... 1. univ. ... to minister to one; render ministering offices to...* Pass. *to be served, ministered unto...* 2. *to wait at table and offer food and drink to the guests...* 3. *to minister l. e. to supply food and the necessaries of life:...* 4. with the acc. *to minister l. e. attend to, anything, that may serve another’s interests... to serve as deacons... to minister a thing unto one, to serve one with or by supplying any thing...*” (Thayer, p. 137; 1247)

“Fundamental to an understanding of *diakoneo* in all its uses is the fact that it has an original concrete sense which is still echoed in its figurative meanings. In secular Greek *diakoneo* which is first found in Herodotus and is never too common, means a. “To wait at table”;... b. Rather more generally it means “to provide or care for”... in this sense it is often used of the work of women... On the basis of these original senses, it has c. The comprehensive meaning “to serve,” (Kittel, TDWNT, Vol 2 p. 82)

How happy this made these prophets is left in obscurity. They were serving those who would receive the blessings of their work.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Heb. 11:39

They did not receive the revelation just as they did not receive the promises themselves. God wanted us all to be a unit.

the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the

gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--

Peter now brings in the labor which the Apostles and prophets of the New Covenant had expended. What Moses started in Gen 3:15, and continued through to Deuteronomy where he promised a new lawgiver and was then supplemented by all the prophets who foretold of these days.

“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24

They laid the groundwork, they foretold of the parameters and guidelines. Everything that Peter and the rest of the apostles and prophets revealed fit perfectly in to what those who lived before them had foretold. But it was left to the apostles to put it all together. The Spirit completed the revelation given to these prophets in the Old Testament. They used them to reveal the mystery.

*how that **by revelation He made known to me the mystery** (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which **in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets**: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, 7 of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power. 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and **to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ**; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Eph. 3:3-11*

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 2Pet. 3:1-3

Yet everything they were preaching in the gospel had already been touched on in general by those who had lived before. This is exactly what Paul said about all his preaching.

Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

It was for this reason that the Bereans could go home and search their Scriptures(the Old Covenant) to see whether what Paul was preaching was true.

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. 12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. Acts 17:11-12

things which angels desire to look into.

It appears from this verse that perhaps the angels were in the same position as these Old Testament prophets. They too had the “*desire*” to see these things. This is one of the strongest emotions man possesses and which now is ascribed to angels.

“epithumeo... prop. to keep the thumos turned upon a thing, hence [cf. our to set one’s heart upon] to have a desire for, long for, absol. to desire [A. V.] to lust after, covet, of those who seek things forbidden ...” (Thayer, p. 238; 1937)

“thumos,... (fr. thuo to rush along or on, be in a heat, breathe violently; ... accordingly it signifies both the spirit panting as it were in the body, and the rage with which the man pants and swells)... In the N.T. 1. passion, angry heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again, ... 2. glow, ardor...” (Thayer, p. 293; 2372)

That this term for lust has a strong negative component is undeniable. But that it also has a good use is clear. Jesus used it in the gospels to describe how the prophets and wise men felt about the same thing the angels here wanted.

*“for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men **desired** to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” Mt 13:17*

Jesus felt it in regard to eating the final pass over with his disciples:

*Then He said to them, “With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; Luke 22:15*

And Paul toward going to be with Christ when this life is over.

*For I am hard pressed between the two, having a **desire** to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Phil 1:23*

This is how the angels felt about what the Old Testament prophets were revealing. This brings up a host of questions that we only have a few Scriptures to draw the answers from. First, we now understand that the angels did not know of God’s plans for mankind. He did not bring the angels in to discuss with them what He was doing.

and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, Eph. 3:9-10

the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. Col 1:26

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—Rom 16:25-26

In these passages it is clearly stated that God’s plans were hidden and kept secret until they were fully revealed. That revelation began with the “*prophetic scriptures*,” (the ones Peter has described here) and concluded with the full disclosure through the gospel preached by the apostles and prophets.

But were the angels kept in complete darkness. That is perhaps too strong a conclusion for what is here stated. Peter simply revealed that they desired to look into it. Either this means the angels were also kept in the darkness on all this and could only get their information as these prophets themselves revealed them, Peter is simply affirming in a general way that these revelations were very interesting to them.

Either way, it ought to have an impact upon us. We hold within our hands the eternal purpose of God. It is the most important document in existence. We should be even more interested in understanding it as these angels since we have so much more to gain from it. Yet we are here informed that the angels keep their “*thumos*” turned toward these things. They have an intense and strong desire to “look” into these things. This is a very interesting term that needs more than one definition to get a full and clear picture.

“parakupto... to stoop to... a thing in order to look at it; to look at with the head bowed forwards; to look into with the body bent; to stoop and look into... metaph. to look carefully into, inspect curiously... of one who would become acquainted with something...” (Thayer, p. 484; 3879)

“parakupto... b ‘to stoop and look into,’ 24.13) to make considerable effort in order to try to find out something - ‘to try to learn, to desire to learn.’ ... ‘things which (even) the angels desire to learn about’ 1 Peter 1:12. (Lou & Nida Greek-English Lexicon NT:3879)

parakupto lit. and primarily, “to stoop sideways” *para*, “aside,” *kupto*, “to bend forward”), denotes “to stoop to look into,” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary NT: 3879)

This is a look that begins with great intensity and desire to see and ends with the intention to make whatever changes are necessary. It is like being in the dark and hearing a noise that doesn’t fit with the circumstances and may require fight or flight. Whenever we are hearing God’s word there is the possibility that something will be heard that requires immediate changes in order to avoid great danger. So this is not just a casual look, it is intense, with the body bent and stooped, prepared to make instant corrections depending on what is seen.

It is also the curious look at something that could bring great reward. When we see something that might be very valuable, we stop and look at it from every angle to get the best possible perspective.

Imagine the angels stooping in order to look at, look into with the body bent, to stoop and look into. They were “looking carefully into” these things. Hence these angels, had a strong burning desire, were stooping over with the head bowed forward and the body bent. It is important that we understand that God uses this same term to describe how we are to look into the completed and “*perfect law of liberty*” which is the combination of all the Scriptures.

*But he who **looks into** the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:25*

What then is Peter trying to do with all this information. He appears to be seeking to instill an appreciation for the value of that which is possessed in the Scriptures by giving as much information about it as he can. The prophets and the angels give some powerful testimony to the value of the gospel. We must not forget.

The Prophets in God's Eternal Purpose

The Bible opens with the simple fact of creation. God doing exactly as he planned and each day ending: "*it was good.*" Everything in this creation began with flawless perfection, exactly as God desired. But when man exercised his free will and ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was like breaking a priceless object of china. All was shattered, ruined and vanity (Ecc 1:1-11; 13-15).

From the perspective of Adam and Eve there was nothing left but to sweep up the pieces, throw them into the trash and begin again. They had no answers. There was no wisdom or power within them to fix what they had done. But God's "*ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts*" (Isa 55:8-9). Often man has no answer and is ready to give up. "*When the vessel that he made of the clay was marred ... he made it again another vessel.*" (Jer 18:4). Surely God could simply send Adam and Eve to chains of darkness and begin again with another man and another woman. His flawless creation uncursed and prepared for others more worthy than they. God had done this with angels, for "*God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*" (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6)

But he did not! He chose instead to begin the plan he had already devised long before. At the moment, when all was lost and broken, God began to reveal the "*manifold wisdom*" of his "*eternal purpose*" "*which he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" (Eph 3:10-11). He told the serpent (Satan) that the woman's seed would "*bruise your head.*" Later he gave more insight to Abraham promising, "*in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.*" (Gen 22:18). Scripture was designed to reveal, prepare, and complete this eternal purpose.

God knew that "*through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,*" and "*through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners.*" But he had already prepared the solution: "*through one man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.*" and "*through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*" (Rom 5:12, 18-19).

No wonder Paul was so moved with amazement as he ended his theme of justification and righteousness through faith in Christ.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" Rom 11:33

THINK OF IT! It was not after Adam and Eve ate of the tree. It was before Adam and Eve were even created and placed in the garden, and before they were even warned about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's eternal purpose and plan for the salvation of all sinners was made before he ever said "*Let their be light!*" He loved us before we were created and planned to pay the cost of our forgiveness before we sinned!

This sounds hard to believe and if we have never seen this or thought of it before it certainly needs more proof than what has been cited up to now. But God has supplied us with abundant proof. He wants us to know this to understand the depth of his love and the power of his forgiveness.

Paul told the Romans that his preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ was "*according to the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested.*" (Rom 16:25-26). Most of what God had planned was hidden not only from the creation until the preaching of the gospel. It was before times eternal (i.e. even before the creation). In speaking of parables Jesus quoted one of the prophets. "*I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world*" (Mt 13:35). All that Jesus revealed in his parables was God's eternal purpose. Peter also spoke of this eternal purpose

when he said *“him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and*

slay.” (Acts 2:23). God revealed these plans hundreds of years before they happened in Isaiah 53.

Paul told Timothy that God *“saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal”* (2 Tim 1:8-10) The gift of Jesus was not a plan devised after Adam sinned. This gift was given to us *“in Christ before times eternal”* (i.e before the foundation of the world).

He told Titus that our *“hope of eternal life”* was *“promised before times eternal”* (Titus 1:1-2). Think about that. God’s promise of eternal life to those of us who had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God had already been promised before times eternal (i.e before the foundation of the world).

So all these plans and purposes were *“kept in silence,” “hidden,” “given,”* and *“promised,”* before times eternal.

So what period of time is *“times eternal?”* Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world”* (Eph 1:3-5). Thus the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation. So the plan clearly precedes the events in the first chapter of Genesis. How much further is not something would can understand or need to know.

God’s eternal purpose through the church began long before the creation. Though Adam and Eve had no plans beyond the moment they made the wrong choice, God had already thought out all possibilities and prepared for it. The prophets and the gospel are simply the revelation of these plans.

Messianic Prophecies

The most important passage concerned the prophecies concerning Jesus is found in the letters of Peter wrote. He explained that while the prophets in the Old Testament spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit, they did not always understand what they were writing and speaking. Yet Peter makes one thing very clear. The salvation we are now awaiting at the last time is the end of our faith. This is the same salvation that the OT prophets inquired and searched diligently about. It was tied to the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow. Although they wanted to know about these things, it was revealed that the portions of Scripture that they did not understand concerning *“the suffering of Christ and the glories that would follow,”* were not part of their Scriptures or the Old Covenant. These were things that they were ministering to us in the new covenant, and they are the same things *“reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.”*

5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ... 8 Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:19-21

For many years, I have been cautious about this conclusion, but after further study of other passages in the New Testament it is the only conclusion possible. The prophecies we call Messianic are not part of the Old Covenant, but the New Covenant. These were the things that God *“foretold by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ would suffer.”*

Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.” Acts 3:17-19

When Moses told the people another prophet would rise up like him, he was speaking of the days of Peter and the apostles. This passage is just as much a part of the New Covenant as it foretold the end of the Old.

For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Acts 3:22-23

Not only does this include Moses, but all the prophets from Samuel. As Peter later wrote, so now he states that *“all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many have spoken”* what they were writing *“foretold these days.”* Hence these same prophets who *“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,”* are the ones who foretold of these days.

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.” Acts 3:24-25

The Jews and their rulers asked for Jesus to be crucified for two reasons. First, because *“they did not know Him,”* and second because they did not hear *“the voices of the prophets read every Sabbath.”*

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. Acts 13:27

Paul also preached these things both in his letters as well as his sermons in Acts. In Romans he revealed that the gospel was *“promised before through the prophets,”* *“concerning His Son Jesus Christ.”*

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom 1:1-4

Not long after writing these words He told Agrippa that all that he was preaching was *“no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come.”* So these writings were given as much for us as for them. Specifically, Paul states that these prophets revealed that *“Christ would suffer,”* *“rise from the dead,”* and *“proclaim light”* both to Jews and Gentiles.

Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

When Paul went to Rome, and spoke to the Jews there, he *“he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and*

prophets.” Hence, both the teachings of the kingdom of God and Jesus are clearly found in the writings of the Old Testament.

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law

of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. Acts 28:23-25

After His resurrection, Jesus also used “*the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.*” He revealed that contained with them are “*all things must be fulfilled which were written about Me.*” Jesus then “*opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*”

Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:44-48

With all these Scriptures it is evident that the Old Testament prophecies that were written about Jesus, the glories that would follow, His suffering, resurrection, were just as much a part of the Old Testament as the New.

Considering all the places where God’s eternal purpose was fully developed and completed before the foundation of the world (Rom. 16:25-26; 2Tim. 1:8-10; Titus 1:1-2; Eph. 1:3-5; 3:10-11).

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. Gal 3:8

Knowing the end from the beginning, God gave the glimpses necessary to allow Paul to say that everything he preached was “*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 26:22). God revealed enough to give the shadow and outline of all Paul preached and wrote. These prophets, selected by God, laid the foundation to give those preaching the gospel what they needed to validate their preaching. God revealed enough of his eternal purpose that the apostles only needed to complete the details. Thus the revelation of God’s eternal purpose was seamless.

These prophecies gave the scriptural proof needed to convince Israel and save souls. They also revealed enough information for the apostles to make pithy doctrinal points using the prophecies to give the extra information to make it clear. Even today we use these prophecies to gain a clearer perspective and clarify things in the NT. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah is still read today as one of the most comprehensive summations of the life and death of the Messiah. Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34 offer additional insight about elders working as shepherds. Jesus ascension and reign are seen more clearly after reading Psalm 2 and Daniel 9:7-14. Finally, prophecy is often the foundation for important NT revelation. For example the Hebrew writer used the order of Melchizedek to help us better see our Messiah as a priest reigning on his throne(Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5-7).

We are greatly indebted to these prophets. They give us admonition(1 Cor 10), make us wise unto salvation, and help us be complete unto every good work(2 Tim 3:15-18).

How the OT Prophets were “*ministering to us.*”

Review:

Peter revealed that some of the words of the prophets who lived under the Old Covenant “**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**” Clearly these writings, though found in the Old Testament Scriptures can be used to further explain and elaborate on the grace we are enjoying today. Though they wanted to better understand this period of time when “**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow,**” it was revealed to them that the information contained in these prophecies were not designed for those living then. The Spirit revealed to them that it was “**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things.**” So these prophecies were not a part of the Old Covenant. These writings were written to minister to those of us who live under the New Covenant. The same things they wrote “**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**” The apostles and prophets of the New Covenant were “*reporting*” or preaching the same things these OT prophets had revealed long ago.

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

When Paul summed up all that he preached as “*saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come*” (Acts 25:22-23), he made it clear that their inspired preaching was simply building upon what God had already revealed to the prophets.

having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come — 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23

Other Passages that Speak on the Importance of these Writings.

But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Matt 26:56

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." 3 "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'" 4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. Mark 1:1-5

As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: Luke 1:70-73

"We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John 1:45

But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Acts 3:18-19

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:21-22

Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. Acts 3:24-25

To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."Acts 10:43

And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: Acts 15:15

separated to **the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, Rom 1:1-2**

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. Rom 3:21-22

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 2Pet. 3:1-3

How the Apostles reported "what the Prophets had Prophesied."

In Peter's first sermon, he stated that the tongues of fire and the speaking in the languages in which they were born "is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel," making it clear that the words of Joel had not been written for them but for us.

Thus "the last days" started with this event. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, he filled all of them and they began to speak with other tongues. This was the answer that the prophets sought and searched diligently to understand. Although it began with the apostles, Peter here revealed that Joel had said He would be poured out on others as well.

But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. Acts 2:16-18

Jesus of Nazareth a Man Approved of God ... You Killed

Peter then combined the recent history they all knew so well with the prophecies that had also spoken about these days. Jesus was approved by God by all the miracles He had performed, but they had rejected him, just as Isaiah had warned. Peter summed up Isaiah 53 and the second Psalm with the statement:

being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:23-24

Those who wanted to go back into the the Old Testament need go no further than Isa 53 where this entire event was described.

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ... 5 The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ... 8 For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. 9 And they made His grave with the wicked — But with the rich at His death, ... 12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors. Isa 53:12

More than that, after the first persecution, Peter uses Psalm 2 to show that the entire event had been explained in detail. David, had long ago revealed exactly what was going to occur.

who **by the mouth of Your servant David have said:** 'Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.' 27 **"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. Acts 4:25-29**

Paul later said. That those in Jerusalem and their rulers did not know "even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath." The very things they did fulfilled exactly what the prophets had said would happen.

For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. 28 And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Acts 13:27-28

God Raised Him from the Dead

Peter clearly states that David spoke of the resurrection of the Christ. David was speaking about Jesus when he gave this prophesy in Psalms 16:8-11. "David says concerning Him." This was a clear statement about the Messiah and David knew it when he wrote it. He knew it was not talking about him, so "foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption."

For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. ... 27 **For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. ... 29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. Acts 2:25-32**

Not only did David speak about His resurrection, but also spoke clearly about the ascension and glory that was given to Him.

"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Acts 2:34-35

There are other prophecies that further elaborate on this moment.

6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.'" Ps 2:6-9

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed. Dan 7:13-14

The Lord said to my Lord, **"Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."** 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! **Ps 110:1-2**

The Hebrew writer ties a lot of this together with his own use of these prophecies. He quotes Ps 2 and 45

upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat

down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"? 8 But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." Heb 1:3-5; 8-9

After healing the lame man, Peter preaches his second sermon, he revealed the events of Jesus death as "things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets," and the remaining time until the second coming are "the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." He quoted Moses and revealed it was Jesus who was "A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me. To him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you." All who refuse obedience would be "utterly destroyed from the people." Finally, "all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, they also told of these days" (Acts 3:12-26).

17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. ... 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' 24 Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:17-18; 22-26

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David (Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing. "The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass." (Acts 4:23-31).

Phillip joined the Eunuch using the words of Isaiah 53 and "beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." (Acts 8:35).

Peter preached to Cornelius saying "to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (10:43).

In Paul's first recorded sermon he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and "of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." All who lived in Jerusalem "because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, "when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb." Through the gospel the apostles "bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers," for "in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption." Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets." (Acts 13:23-41)

When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles, James said the prophets had already revealed God's will. "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to

take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written..." It was the prophets who were used by "the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old" (Acts 15:14-18).

In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa Paul summed up his service to God with "so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14), and "I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come," (Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was "testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening."

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets "ministered to us and "gospel preachers reported it"

Review:

The prophets who lived under the Old Covenant "**prophesied of the grace that would come to you.**" They were describing "**sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**" These things were given "**not to themselves, but to us they were ministering.**"

It was given to the apostles to complete the process as they were "**now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit.**"

Peter's 2nd Sermon

After healing the lame man, Peter preached his second sermon. He began with the basic historical facts they all knew, ending with explanation of the healing of the lame man. Which the Sanhedrin later admitted: men? "*For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.* (Acts 4:16).

God glorified His Servant Jesus

You delivered up

You denied in the presence of Pilate

Pilate was determined to let Him go.

You denied the Holy One and the Just

You asked for a murderer be granted to you

You killed the Prince of life

God raised from the dead, — We are witnesses

Peter offers some consolation with their ignorance. Yet now that the gospel being preached, it was all being revealed. **Even the apostles were learning it for the first time.** God was

actually fulfilling the things foretold by all the prophets. They needed to repent and be converted for three reasons.

1. *Receive the remission of sins,*

2. *Time of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord*

3a. *God can send Jesus Christ (His Second Coming)*

3b. *Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things,*

3c. *God has spoken by mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.*

The last three points are an amazing revelation. They reveal that there was still more that the Old Testament had revealed that was yet to be fulfilled.

17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, 21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Acts 3:17-21

As Jesus had revealed, heaven and earth cannot pass away (which will occur when Jesus returns (2Pet. 3:10-13).

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matt 5:17-19

The conversion of the Jews would lead to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the restoration of the tabernacle of David that had fallen down. This prophecy was first spoken by Amos and then clearly applied by James at the Jerusalem conference. It was preached first to them and God expected them to obey it and help fulfill all these things.

"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name," Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:11-12

James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: 14 Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And **with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:** 16 'After! this I will return And **will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name.** Says the Lord who does all these things.' Acts 15:13-17

Peter then quoted Moses and revealed that it was Jesus who was "a Prophet like me from your brethren." Jesus was the one Moses had made direct reference to. It was Jesus whom they must "hear in all things, whatever He says to you." The apostles had heard these very things from Jesus not long before:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20

They were in grave danger of violating the very thing Moses had strictly charged against. If they refused to obey, they will be "utterly destroyed from the people."

22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, **'The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'**

Peter concluded by revealing something very similar to what he revealed years later in his letter. All the prophets have foretold of these days. "sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow." (1Pet. 1:11). He then reminds them that they are the heirs of the covenant God made with Abraham. This is why God had allowed them to hear the gospel first.

Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.** 25 You are sons of the prophets, and of **the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'** 26 To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities." Acts 3:22-26

During the trial that followed Peter made another reference to the restoration of all things, and the role God had hoped the Jews would have in all of it. But the leaders had rejected the role, Just as God had foretold.

If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 **This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'** 12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Acts 4:9-12

Peter also returns to this theme in his first letter.

Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame." 7 Therefore, to you who believe, **He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone," 8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense."** They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed. 9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10 **who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.** 1 Peter 2:4-10

The three prophecies Peter refers to are found in Ps. 118:19-26; Isa. 28:16-17 and Hos. 1:6-11

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness; I will go through them, And I will praise the Lord. 20 This is the gate of the Lord, Through which the righteous shall enter. 21 I will praise You, For You have answered me, And have become my salvation. 22 The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. 23 This was the Lord's doing; It is marvelous in our eyes. 24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. 25 Save now, I pray, O Lord; O Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We have blessed you from the house of the Lord. Ps 118:19-26

Therefore thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; Whoever believes will not act hastily. 17 Also I will make justice the measuring line, And righteousness the plummet; Isa 28:16-17

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then God said to him: "**Call her name Lo-Ruhamah, For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, But I will utterly take them**

away. ... 8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then God said: "**Call his name Lo-Ammi, For you are not My people, And I will not be your God.** 10 **'Yet the number of the children of Israel Shall be as the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered.** And it shall come to pass In the place **where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There it shall be said to them, 'You are sons of the living God.'** 11 Then the children of Judah and the children

of Israel Shall be gathered together, And appoint for themselves one head; And they shall come up out of the land, For great will be the day of Jezreel! (Hos. 1:6-11)

After Peter and John were arrested and threatened, they comforted the disciples, reminding them that David(Ps 2) had spoken about the very events they were then experiencing.

"The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed: for of a truth **in this city against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy council foreordained to come to pass."** Acts 4:23-31

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." Ps 2:1-6

Phillip joined the Eunuch using the words of Isaiah 53 and "beginning from this Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." (Acts 8:35).

Peter preached to Cornelius saying "to him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins" (10:43).

In Paul's first recorded sermon he said that God raised David to be king of Israel and "of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." All who lived in Jerusalem "because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him." His crucifixion had been foretold by the prophets, "when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb." Through the gospel the apostles "bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers," for "in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure (blessings) of David. Because he saith also in another (psalm), Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption." Finally as he concluded the sermon he said, "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets." (Acts 13:23-41)

When the church gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the Gentiles, James said the prophets had already revealed God's will. "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written..." It was the prophets who were used by "the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old" (Acts 15:14-18).

In his defence before Turtullus and Agrippa Paul summed up his service to God with "so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets" (Acts 24:14), and "I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come," (Acts 26:22).

In his discussion with the Jews in Rome, he was "testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from

morning till evening.”

Although they preached to Israel hundreds of years before the birth of the Messiah, all Christians should praise and thank God for the blessings these prophets who ministered to us bring today. In the gospels, Acts, and the epistles their words give the foundation and structure of our faith. The things they foreshadowed and revealed were simply placed in their proper context.

As Peter summed it up, “*And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.*” (2 Pet 1:19-21).

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him (be) the glory for ever. Amen. Rom 11:33-36

How Prophets “ministered to us & “gospel preachers reported it” (2)

From several passages in the NT, God revealed that His eternal purpose was fully prepared and planned before the creation. God knew everything He was going to do and how man was going to respond to it. It also makes it clear that this eternal purpose was not simply for what we see and understand in this creation, but that it was also intended to accomplish some very important things in God’s creation as well.

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to **make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God who created all things; to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly (places) might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God,** Eph. 3:8-10*

*according to **the revelation of the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal, but now is manifested.** Rom. 16:25-26*

*I will open my mouth in parables; I will **utter things hidden from the foundation of the world** Mt. 13:35*

*Him, being delivered up by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,** Acts 2:23*

*For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together **28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.** Acts 4:27-29*

*saved us, and called us with a holy calling, ... **according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal** 2Tim. 1:8-10*

*“In hope of eternal life” was “**promised before times eternal**” Titus 1:1-2*

*“He chose us in Him **before the foundation of the world**” Eph. 1:3-5*

Hence, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God were “*kept in silence,*” “*hidden,*” “*given,*” and “*promised,*” before times eternal. What exactly is meant by the concept of *eternal*? Though it is impossible to understand how far back into eternity these plans go, Paul revealed that “*He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:3-5). Thus all the plans for the eternal purpose were already complete before the creation.

Using the formula Peter revealed in the title, we will begin with what the prophet said and then see how those who preach the gospel used them.

*To them it was revealed that, **not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which***

now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into. 1Pet. 1:10-12

The Plans for Evangelism

God revealed many things in the prophets that explain how the book of Acts unfolded. James summed all this up in the discussion over how the Gentiles would enter the church in Acts 15.

*And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 16 'After! this I will return And will **rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,** Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 "Known to God from eternity are all His works. Acts 15:15-19*

When all these things Come upon you the Blessing and the Curse.

The concept of the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David is first mentioned by Moses. After describing all the blessings God would begin to give them and the curses that would follow upon their disobedience, God revealed what would happen after both Israel (ten tribes taken by Assyria) and Judah (residue taken by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon). After they are driven into all these nations, God made a promise to those who “return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,” that He would “bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.”

*"Now it shall come to pass, **when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. 4 If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live. Deut 30:1-6***

Although this had a minor fulfillment when Cyrus sent a small remnant back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, it's main fulfillment was described in the great commission by Jesus Himself and “was reported by those who preached the gospel to us.”

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 **Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations,** baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. Matt 28:18-20*

***Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.** 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-17*

Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to

rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that **repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.** Luke 24:46-48

you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **even to the remotest part of the earth** Acts 1:8

Within these passages we see the fulfillment of Moses words: **"If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you."**

Yet there is more than this in Moses' words. We also see the plan of salvation unfolded in the words: **"the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."** Jesus' discussion of baptism is later revealed by Paul to be this **"circumcision of the heart."**

In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col 2:11-14

The Second Gathering

Isaiah takes the words of Moses and combines them with the **"tabernacle of David that has fallen"** that James described. At his call, Isaiah asked how long he would preach and God told him it would be until **"As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump."** (Isa 6:13). He begins by describing the state of the tabernacle of David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Isa 11:1-2

Isaiah then takes all these thoughts and weaves them together. At the time that **"the root comes from the stump of Jesse (Jesus),"** He will be a banner to both the people (Jews) and the Gentiles will also seek Him. It will be in that day **"that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left."** Again it will be in that day, as described by Jesus in the great commission that God **"will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth."** That this is a summation of the entire book of Acts is obvious.

And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. 12 He will set up a banner for the nations, And will assemble the outcasts of Israel, And gather together the dispersed of Judah From the four corners of the earth. ... 16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people Who will be left from Assyria, As it was for Israel In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt. Isa 11:10-12, 16

The words so closely match. Even the highway is described as something that John the Baptist would begin.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; Isa 40:3-4

A highway shall be there, and a road, And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. The

unclean shall not pass over it, But it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool, Shall not go astray. Isa 35:8

The Shepherd Will Search for His Sheep

In the midst of condemning the shepherds of Israel who had been responsible for the destruction of the sheep, God returns to this theme, describing the work revealed in Acts as a shepherd seeking for the lost sheep. He begins by promising "**Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep.**" The book of Acts revealed how "**I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land.**"

*"For thus says the Lord God: "**Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. 13 And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,**" says the Lord God. 16 "**I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.**" Ezek 34:11-16*

A little later in this prophesy, God makes it clear that He is again speaking of the time of the Messiah. All of this will occur when "**I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David.**" Hence at the very moment that Acts began and Jesus became their shepherd and prince, all of these things would occur. There is no other time except in the book of Acts that "**I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken.**"

22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them — My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I, the Lord, have spoken. Ezek 34:11-16

I will Gather My Flock out of all the Countries I have Driven Them

God also used Jeremiah to describe the conditions as they were fulfilled in Acts. He again condemned the shepherds of Israel as Ezekiel had done. This time not only does God promise that: "**I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds.**" but also revealed that it would be at that same time "**I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking.**" Even the growth and development of the eldership to shepherd the flock is described here.

*"Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the Lord. 2 Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the Lord. 3 "**But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,**" says the Lord. Jer. 23:1-4*

The time date for all these events takes us right back to the words of James, "**I will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up.**"

God promised that: ***"I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper."***

5 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "That I will raise to David a Branch of

righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer 23:1-8

I will Take you from Among the Nations, Gather you out of All Countries

Ezekiel gives us one more prophecy to tie all these things together. This would not be done for their sake, because they had profaned God's name. It would be done for God's Holy name. He promised: ***"I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols."*** This too is described Hebrews 10:19-24: *"having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."*

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord," says the Lord God, "when I am hallowed in you before their eyes. 24 For I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. 28 Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you. 30 And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 Not for your sake do I do this," says the Lord God, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!" Ezek. 36:22-32

Messianic Prophecies - 5: Prophets Ministering to Us

Introduction: A small portion of the writings of the Old Covenant were not written for those then living. They were placed in the Scriptures for the purpose of giving those who would live under the New Covenant an additional rock upon which to build their faith. Many of these prophecies were accurate descriptions of events that would occur hundreds and even thousands of years in the future. Many of these passages were used by the apostles and prophets in the New Covenant age to give assurance to those hearing their preaching that what they were saying was true. Other prophecies were given to give a clearer understanding to obscure things that would occur in the future. The eternal purpose of God is so infinitely complex that often it takes both pictures, shadows and types to help us understand them.

As the apostles and elders gathered together to discuss the relationship of the Gentiles to the Jews under the New Covenant, it was such an unexpected and amazing thing that many had

great difficulty understanding that the law was simply a middle wall of partition and once it was done away, there would no longer be any distinction. To sooth and calm some of the more zealous Jews, James quoted one of them.

*And with this **the words of the prophets agree**, just as it is written: 16 **'After! this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up;** 17 **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,** Says the Lord who does all these things.' 18 **"Known to God from eternity are all His works.** 19 **Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God,** Acts 15:15-20*

The context of Amos is as important as the few passages the James quotes. It began with God's proclamation that the decision to destroy the entire house of Israel had already been made even at this early date. Everything that God had previously condemned in the 10 tribes of Israel was also being done in Judah. So God gives Amos a vision of God standing by the altar in Jerusalem, proclaiming that the temple would be destroyed and all of them destroyed along with it. This is a very accurate picture of what Nebchadnezzar did long after the 10 tribes had been destroyed and removed.

*I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said: **"Strike the doorposts, that the thresholds may shake, And break them on the heads of them all. I will slay the last of them with the sword. He who flees from them shall not get away, And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.** 2 **"Though they dig into hell, From there My hand shall take them; Though they climb up to heaven, From there I will bring them down;** Amos 9:1-2*

God continued by revealing that He has had His eyes on the sinful kingdom, just as Moses had revealed:

*"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 27 **for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord, then how much more after my death?** 28 **Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them.** 29 **For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."** Deut. 31:26-29*

The time for judgment was nearing and God was very clear exactly what He would do. Once again, God reveals exactly what the book of Acts was written to reveal. Through the gospel, "as grain is sifted in the sieve, not the smallest grain will fall to the ground."

***"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, And I will destroy it from the face of the earth; Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,"** Says the Lord. 9 **"For surely I will command, And will sift the house of Israel among all nations, As grain is sifted in a sieve; Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground.** Amos 9:8-9*

Even as James was speaking the words of fulfillment, a portion he had omitted was also drawing nearer for the second time.

***All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword,** Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.' 11 **"On that day I will raise up The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, And repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, And rebuild it as in the days of old; 12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,"** Says the Lord who does this thing. Amos 9:8-11*

The fall of that tabernacle was accurately described by Jeremiah as He strictly warned Israel

that at that moment their fate was still in their own hands and if they would stop violating the Sabbath, they could keep the tabernacle of David.

"And it shall be, if you heed Me carefully," says the Lord, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 then shall

enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. ... 27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle a fire in its gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."" Jer 17:24-25, 27

Later is Jeremiah, He returns to this moment that came and promises the same thing He did in Amos.

Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it. 8 'For it shall come to pass in that day, 'Says the Lord of hosts, 'That I will break his yoke from your neck, And will burst your bonds; Foreigners shall no more enslave them. 9 But they shall serve the Lord their God, And David their king, Whom I will raise up for them. 10 'Therefore do not fear, O My servant Jacob, 'says the Lord, 'Nor be dismayed, O Israel; For behold, I will save you from afar, And your seed from the land of their captivity. Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet, And no one shall make him afraid. 11 For I am with you,' says the Lord, 'to save you; Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you, Yet I will not make a complete end of you. But I will correct you in justice, And will not let you go altogether unpunished.' Jer 30:7-11

The Rod from the Stem of Jesse and Branch from his Roots

Changing the figure from a tabernacle (dwelling place) to a tree that has been cut down, Jesus is depicted as the branch that has grown out of the stump of David to become the tree that would fulfill all of God's promises given to David.

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. 3 His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. Isa 11:1-5

At the same time that this Branch grows from his roots, He will stand as a banner to the people. At that time two things will happen that completely explain what James is describing. He will be a banner. The Gentiles will seek Him and God will set his hand the second time to call the remnant of his people back to Him.

"And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious." 11 It shall come to pass in that day That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time To recover the remnant of His people who are left, From Assyria and Egypt, From Pathros and Cush, From Elam and Shinar, From Hamath and the islands of the sea. Isa. 11:10-11

Jeremiah also described the Messiah as a branch. In this prophesy, God adds a few more details. What had fallen was God's promise about a man being on the throne of David. Israel had forfeited that blessing when they refused to heed Jeremiah regarding the Sabbath. But God

would find a better way to fulfill the promise by finding a descendant who would be faithful for all eternity. Once again, God also promises that it will be at that day that all of God's promises to Israel and Judah would be fulfilled. God also introduces something new. The Priests and the Levites would also be restored.

'Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah: 15 'In those days and at that time

I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. 16 In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely. And this is the name by which she will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.' 17 'For thus says the Lord: 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the priests, the Levites, lack a man to offer burnt offerings before Me, to kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.'" Jer 33:14-18

God continues this prophesy by comparing it to the covenant God made with day and night. This covenant was tied to the promise God made to Noah after he left the ark and offered a sacrifice to the Lord (Gen. 8:20-22). Just as the covenant could not be broken, neither can the covenant that David would lack a son to reign. That promise had only been suspended because of the wickedness of Israel and His descendants, which God had even made a part of the promise as Solomon had pointed out: that the Lord may fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, "If your sons take heed to their way, to walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, 'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel." (1Kings 2:4).

God again mentions the Levites and priests as His ministers. He will multiply the descendants of David like the sand of the sea. Since this promise is the same one God gave to Abraham, it appears that God's promise to Abraham also came through David. Yet not only through David, but also through Levi. This has created some difficulty for some, but is the only logical conclusion when we look at the passages in the NT.

And the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the Lord: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.'" Jer 33:19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; 21 and (having) a great priest over the house of God; 22 let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, Heb 10:19-22

Through him then **let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb 13:15-16**

We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. Heb 13:10

unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, 5 ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, **to be a holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Pet 2:4-5

But ye are a elect race, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people for (God's) own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. 1 Pet 2:9-10

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and

who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, (who is) the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and **he made us (to be) kings, (to be) priests unto his God and Father**; to him (be) the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen. 8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty. 9 I John, your brother and partaker with you in tribulation and kingdom and patience (which are) in Jesus, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. Rev 1:4-9

And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood (men) of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them (to be) **unto our God kings and priests**; and they reign upon earth. Rev 5:9-10

Zechariah gives us all there is the picture of the Righteous branch.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, You and your companions who sit before you, **For they are a wondrous sign; For behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH.** 9 For behold, the stone That I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' Says the Lord of hosts, '**And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.** 10 **In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'Everyone will invite his neighbor Under his vine and under his fig tree.'**" Zech 3:8-10

Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. 12 Then speak to him, saying, '**Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord; 13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the Lord. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."**' 14 "Now the elaborate crown shall be for a memorial in the temple of the Lord for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even those from afar shall come and build the temple of the Lord. Then you shall know that the Lord of hosts has sent Me to you. And this shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." Zech 6:11-15

A more literal explanation was given in Isaiah.

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called **Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.** 7 **Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever.** The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isa 9:6-7