The First Epistle of PETER

To elect pilgrims

1 [1]Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect sojourners[1] of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, [2]*elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the setting apart of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling with the blood of Jesus Christ:[2] May grace and peace be multiplied[3] to you.

Do not take your inheritance for granted

Begotten into an incorruptible inheritance

[3]Blessed be the God and Father[4] of our Lord Jesus Christ,[5] who according to His great mercy has given us[6] another birth[7] into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead,[8] [4]into an imperishable and undefiled and unfading inheritance,[9] already reserved in the heavens for you, [5]who are being guarded by the power of God through faith[10] unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.[11]

Genuineness of faith proved by testing

[6]You should be overjoyed about this, even if just now, briefly, of necessity,[12] you have been distressed by a variety of trials, [7]so that the

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[1] One could render 'resident aliens' or perhaps even 'refugees'—these are presumably Christians who had left their homelands because of persecution (but since Paul was apostle to the Gentiles, Peter may be writing to Jews, as did James); Peter will emphasize the security of their position in heaven, in contrast to the uncertainty of their situation on earth. For a discussion of the implications of Peter addressing this letter to five provinces, please see the article "Multiple Autograph Copies", available from my website: www.prunch.org, or in the fourth through sixth edition of *God Has Preserved His Text!* (pages 16-19).

[2] Peter is evidently making a point of including all three persons of the Godhead in the process of our salvation: the Father chooses, the Spirit sets apart (He works in our minds to encourage or predispose us to obey) and the Son paid the price for our cleansing. God has done His part, but each of us must obey.

[3] "Multiplied"—not just a little, lots!

[4] "The God and Father" is one person.

[5] Since His victory by the cross and resurrection, the official name of Jehovah the Son is 'the Lord Jesus Christ', to which Peter adds the possessive pronoun.

[6] The 1st person plural is presumably inclusive, including the people Peter is addressing; in the next verse he switches to the 2nd plural, applying the truth directly to them.

[7] The Text neither says nor implies that God begot them the first time (that was done by their physical father); He is giving them a second begetting, a spiritual one.

[8] If Jesus had not arisen we would have no hope, but now we have a "living" hope, that will not let us down.

[9] Like, wow! Now that is an inheritance! And it is already reserved. Before talking about the difficulties they are facing Peter emphasizes the incredible blessing of a secure position.

[10] Time and again Peter will present both divine sovereignty and human responsibility; God guarantees His part, we must do our part.

[11] The full manifestation of our salvation is still future.

[12] The trials are necessary to prove the quality of the faith.

demonstrated genuineness of your faith (much more precious than gold that perishes, albeit tested through fire) may translate into[1] praise, glory and honor[2] at the revelation of Jesus Christ—**8**whom not having understood[3] you love, into whom believing (not yet seeing) you exult with joy inexpressible, already glorified,[4] **9**obtaining for yourselves the end result of your faith,[5] the salvation of your souls.

Salvation foretold by prophets

10Concerning this salvation[6] the prophets, who prophesied about the grace *that would come* to you, searched and inquired diligently, **11**investigating into what occasion, or what sort of occasion, the Spirit of Christ[7] who was in them was indicating[8] as He testified beforehand the sufferings *that would be inflicted* on Christ[9] and the glories that would follow them. **12**It was revealed to them that they were not ministering these things to themselves, but to you;[10] which things have now been announced to you by those who proclaimed the gospel to you, with[11] the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things that angels really desire to look into.[12]

Be serious, be holy, be fearful

13Therefore, having girded up the loins of your mind,[13] staying

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1 Literally, "may be found into".

2 These are things that the faithful person will receive. To hear "Well done, good and faithful servant" from the lips of the Sovereign will be the ultimate praise.

3 The familiar 'seen' is based on about 7% of the Greek manuscripts (early, but of objectively inferior quality); to render 'known' rather than "understood" would require qualification.

4 Anyone who has experienced this joy will agree with Peter—it definitely is not 'natural'; it is 'other-worldly', a foretaste of heaven.

5 Here Peter emphasizes human responsibility; the verb 'obtain' is in the middle (reflexive) voice.

6 "This salvation" presumably includes the basis and the process, as well as the result; evidently quite different from the 'salvation' the prophets themselves knew.

7 The Spirit of Christ was at work in the Old Testament. Is this a reference to the Holy Spirit, or did Jehovah the Son also do some inspiring?

8 Evidently Peter had access to information that we do not. However, when a prophet spoke or wrote under inspiration, he would not necessarily receive an explanation of the interpretation. Anything pertaining to the Messiah would be of intense interest, and they would certainly keep mulling over the implications—assuming a single advent, it would be hard to reconcile glory and suffering.

9 The Text says literally, 'the sufferings into Christ'.

10 The familiar 'to us' (TR, AV, NKJV) is based on about 14% of the Greek manuscripts, and is more congenial than "to you"; I take it that having already narrowed the focus to his addressees, Peter just keeps on going.

11 The more usual rendering is 'by', but I do not think it fits the context. The Holy Spirit went along with the Gospel.

12 That is what the Text says, but I am not sure what it means. I assume that angels can read, so are they not allowed to? Or is it that they cannot really understand why the Sovereign would do something like that? Do angels have 'soul'—emotions, ambitions, etc.? I wonder.

13 This is obviously a figure of speech, but I wasn't sure how else to render it; in order to work, fight, run, or whatever, they would tie in their loose garments with a rope or a

sober,[1] rest your hope fully upon the grace being brought to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ[2]—**14**as children of obedience,[3] not conforming yourselves to the former lusts as in your ignorance, **15**but just as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your way of life, **16**because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."[4]

17Also, since you invoke as Father[5] the One who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves during the time of your sojourn *here* **in fear**,[6] **18**knowing that it was not with perishable things (silver or gold) that you were redeemed from the futile way of life handed down by your forefathers,[7] **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a faultless and pure lamb; **20**who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world,[8] but was revealed in these last times for your sake, **21**who through Him are believing into God,[9] who raised Him out from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are into God.

Born again through an eternal Word

22Since you have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit,[10] resulting in sincere brotherly love, you must love one another fervently from a pure heart, **23**having been begotten again, not from a corruptible seed but an incorruptible,[11] through the living Word

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belt—the idea appears to be to prepare the mind for action, which would involve discipline and determination.

1 I take this phrase to be basically synonymous to the figure of speech; staying sober involves being disciplined and determined.

2 In verse 7 I rendered the same Greek phrase as 'at the revelation of Jesus Christ', referring to His second coming, but here in verse 13 "being brought" is in the present tense, so I take the revelation to be contemporaneous. The more we obey, the more Jesus reveals Himself to us.

3 Peter, a Jew, uses a Jewish idiom—he is not saying they are children, but are to be characterized by obedience.

4 Since God is holy all the time, we are to be also. The quote is from Leviticus 11:45 or 19:2.

5 To "invoke as Father" is to place yourself under His authority and protection—also His evaluation!

6 "In fear" is emphasized in the Text. We tend to forget just who and what God is, and so we get complacent—<u>not</u> a good idea, says Peter.

7 All ways of life that are not biblical are futile. We should not be apologetic about challenging people's belief systems or presuppositions, provided we are in a position to present the biblical worldview.

8 This sort of 'blows my mind'—the Text is saying that the Lamb, with blood shed, was so known before the creation of our race and planet; which means that the Creator knew, before creating, what would happen and the terrible redemption price He Himself would have to pay, yet He went ahead anyway. Wow!

9 "Into" not 'in', both here and at the end of the verse; what is involved is a change of position, from being outside to being inside.

10 Some 8% of the Greek manuscripts omit "through the Spirit" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

11 The seed that Adam received when he was created proved to be corruptible, in fact became corrupted upon his Fall, and that corrupted seed has been passed down through the succeeding generations [less than 300]; so our first begetting, by a human father,

of God that remains *valid* forever.[1] 24For: "All flesh is as grass, and all man's glory as flower of grass. The grass withers and its flower falls off, but the Lord's word endures forever."[2] 25Now this is the good word that was proclaimed to you.[3]

To grow you must eat

2 1So then, laying aside all malignity[4]—even all deceit and play-actings and envies, yes all malicious speaking—2crave the pure spiritual 'milk',[5] like newborn babies do, so that by it you may grow into salvation,[6] 3if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is benevolent. 4Coming to Him, a living stone—rejected indeed by men but chosen by God, precious—5you also, as living stones, are being built[7] into a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.[8]

The Chief Cornerstone

6That is why the Scripture contains: "Attention, I am laying in Zion a chief cornerstone, chosen, precious, and the one who rests his trust

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was with that corrupt seed. God gives us a second begetting with a pure seed that cannot be corrupted.

1 As it says in Psalm 119:89, "Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven." Some 6% of the Greek manuscripts omit "forever" (as in NIV, NASB, etc.).

2 The quote is from Isaiah 40:6-8.

3 Wait a minute—was the "good word" they proclaimed limited to the Old Testament? I would say it was mostly about Jesus, the content of the Gospels. So Peter is saying that New Testament material is also God's Word. By the time he wrote this letter, Matthew and Mark were already in circulation, and maybe even Luke. (Luke was 'published' in 45 AD.)

4 This refers to the deliberate effort to harm others. If they must 'lay aside' such attitudes and activities, the implication is that they have not yet, or at least not sufficiently—actually, if they are still involved in such activities, they have quite a ways to go.

5 Since Peter has just referred overtly to God's Word, it is generally assumed that the "milk" here is a metaphor for that Word. Peter is not saying that they are babies, just that they should imitate the craving.

6 Until quite recently, based upon von Soden's apparent ascribing of some 80% attestation to the shorter reading (80% of the extant Greek manuscripts), I was rather critical of the longer form; I argued that Peter was writing to the "elect" [1:2], to the "redeemed" [1:18], to the "born again" [1:23], to a "holy priesthood" [2:5], to "believers" [2:7], to "slaves of God" [2:16]—they did indeed need to grow, but not "into salvation". However, the evidence as presented by ECM [*Editio Critica Maior*] looks quite different—some 65% for the longer reading, including the best line of transmission, and joined by all three ancient versions, a not insignificant witness. Time and again Peter presents both divine sovereignty and human responsibility; God guarantees His part, we must do our part. According to 1:5 above the full manifestation [at least] of our salvation is still future. Here in 2:3 the immediately following "if indeed" would appear to allow for some uncertainty as to their spiritual condition; Peter is emphasizing their responsibility.

7 Spiritual growth is a process, much like physical growth.

8 Much of the preaching nowadays focuses on what we are supposed to get, rather than what we are supposed to do. We need to talk more about what God is supposed to get—'spiritual sacrifices'. Don't sacrifices cost?

upon Him will absolutely not be humiliated."[1] 7So then, this recompense is for you who believe, but to those who disobey,[2] "the stone that the builders rejected is just the one that became the chief cornerstone,"[3] 8also "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense";[4] being disobedient to the Word, they stumble, to which, indeed, they were appointed.[5]

A royal priesthood

9But you are a chosen family, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a private-property people, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; 10who formerly were not a people but now are God's people, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.[6]

Your practice should be consistent with your standing

11Dear ones, I urge you to abstain from the lusts of the flesh, that war against the soul,[7] 12keeping your way of life among the nations praiseworthy (you being foreigners and sojourners), so that wherein they speak against you as evildoers, in spite of the praiseworthy deeds they have observed,[8] they may glorify God in the day of visitation.[9]

Respect civil authority

13Therefore subordinate yourselves to every human institution because of the Lord, whether to a king, as being in authority, 14or to governors, as being sent by him, both for punishment of evildoers and

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1 The quote is from Isaiah 28:16. I suppose that the not being humiliated refers to the final Accounting.

2 Instead of "disobey", perhaps 8% of the Greek manuscripts have 'disbelieve' (as in NIV, NASB, TEV, etc.).

3 The quote is from Psalm 118:22.

4 The quote is from Isaiah 8:14. One is reminded of the Sovereign's words in Matthew 21:44. "Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but upon whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

5 Were they 'appointed' to stumble, a direct and necessary consequence of being disobedient to the Word, or were they 'appointed' to be disobedient? If the latter, this would become one of a very few passages that overtly point to 'double predestination' or preterition (that the lost are predestined to be lost). The answer hinges on the grammar, the antecedent of the pronoun 'which'—is it the finite verb 'stumble' or the participle 'disobey'? Being higher in rank, the finite form presumably takes precedence. Also, since there are hundreds of passages that clearly teach human responsibility, I take the former option to be the preferred interpretation.

6 Peter alludes to a number of OT passages, including Hosea 2:23. Presumably it is in this world, this life, that we are to proclaim God's excellencies—which raises the question: how much time do we spend doing that?

7 When we indulge the flesh, our soul is adversely affected; to 'indulge' is more than normal, necessary use.

8 The critics have already observed the good deeds—they know their criticism is false.

9 What "day of visitation" might this be? Is it a personal visitation wherein God touches a critic, wakes him up and he glorifies God; or is it the Day of judgment where 'every knee will bow and every tongue confess', only it will be too late to do them any good? In either event, we are to live in such a way that we do not furnish any pretext to those who are looking for ways to 'justify' their unbelief.

for praise of good-doers.[1] 15Because such is the will of God, to silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good: 16as free (not using the freedom as a cover for evil), yet as slaves of God. 17Respect everyone;[2] love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king.

A word for servants

18Household servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unscrupulous.[3] 19For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God someone endures grief, suffering unjustly. 20For what credit is it if upon sinning and being beaten you endure patiently? But if upon doing good and suffering you endure patiently, this is commendable before God.

Christ gave the example

21You have really been called to this, because Christ also suffered in our behalf, leaving you[4] an example that you should follow in His footsteps: 22who did not commit sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth; 23who being reviled did not revile in return, suffering did not threaten but committed it to Him who judges righteously; 24who Himself bore our sins in His own body[5] on the tree, so that we, having died to those sins,[6] might live for the[7] righteousness; by whose **wound**[8] you were healed. 25Yes, you were like straying sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our[9] souls.

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1 But what happens if the 'government' does just the opposite, persecutes those who fear God and protects the corrupt? We have spiritual 'weapons' (authority) that we should learn how to use, but the time may come when we must say with Peter, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29), and take the consequences.

2 Since every human being carries the 'image of God', that image should be respected (even when it is scarcely recognizable).

3 Slavery was a normal aspect of the culture at that time. Note that belonging to Christ did not automatically change one's social situation; and it did not change a bad boss. However, we can use our spiritual authority to 'improve' a bad boss.

4 15% of the Greek manuscripts have "our" and 'us' (1st person pl., as in TR, AV and NKJV) while a different 15% have 'your' and "you" (2nd person pl., as in the eclectic text currently in vogue and most modern versions)—I take it that the 85% readings are correct ("our" and "you"); in addressing his readers Peter uses the expected 2nd person, but referring to the scope of the benefits of Christ's suffering he properly uses the inclusive 1st person.

5 This refers to the human body of Jesus that was nailed to the cross. Without a body there is no blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

6 Since the Lord died <u>for</u> our sins, we should die <u>to</u> them (separate ourselves from them).

7 The Text has the definite article; the point being, I suppose, that there is only one true righteousness, God's.

8 "Wound" is singular in the Text; of course the familiar 'stripes' sounds better, but do you really suppose that the marks left by the individual blows produce our healing? It was THE WOUND, when the Father placed on the Son the sins of the world (including yours and mine). In verses 22-25 Peter obviously has Isaiah 53:4-12 in mind, though he creates his own mosaic.

9 The evidence is split between "our" and 'your'; both make good sense, but I take it that the best line of transmission reads "our", inclusive.

A word to wives

3 [1]Similarly,[1] wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if some are disobedient to the Word, they may be won over, without a word, by the conduct of their wives [2](having watched your pure behavior *accompanied* by respect), [3]whose adorning should not be the outward one of braiding hair and wearing gold, or putting on fine clothing,[2] [4]but rather the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *adorning* of the gentle and quiet spirit that is of great value before God. [5]For this is how the holy women who hoped in God in former times also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, [6]as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him 'lord', whose (f) daughters you became[3] by doing good and not being afraid of any intimidation.[4]

A word to husbands

[7]Similarly,[5] husbands, live together knowledgeably as with a weaker vessel,[6] according honor to the wife especially as being a joint heir of the grace of life,[7] for your prayers not to be hindered.[8]

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1 This is parallel to 2:18 above, and both are examples of "the will of God", 2:15.

2 Peter is not advocating a sloppy or slovenly appearance; the problem is the vanity and competition expressed by extravagant hairstyles, clothes, jewelry—anything to get attention.

3 A woman becomes a 'daughter of Abraham' by faith in God; she becomes a 'daughter of Sarah' by doing good.

4 An incorruptible character does not surrender to intimidation. Since there has never been a lack of evil people in the world, to keep on being and doing good one must stand up to intimidation.

5 This is parallel to 3:1 and 2:18.

6 Oh dear me, definitely <u>not</u> politically correct in this year of our Lord! But then, when did the Sovereign Lord ever worry about being 'politically correct', especially in a culture heavily influenced by Satan? And when did the Sovereign's true servants ever worry about being 'politically correct' in such a culture? Remember James 4:4—"Adulterers and adulteresses! [so 98% of the Greek manuscripts]. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? So whoever may want to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." 1 John 2:15-17 is to the same effect. To love the things of the world (especially its values) is to adulterate against God: "the love of the Father is not in him". As Joshua said so long ago, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve" (Joshua 24:15). In Genesis 3:16 the Creator said to the woman, "your desire shall be for your husband"—a woman's emotional health and sense of security are heavily influenced by her husband's attitudes, more so than vice versa.

7 "The grace of life"—I love it. I take this to be the bottom line in marriage, husband and wife are joint heirs of the grace of life. Without males the race dies out; without females the race dies out; so both sexes are 100% necessary, so they are equally important. But for people to live together harmoniously there has to be organization, a chain of command, an authority structure.

8 Oops, there is more involved than meets the eye. "Your" is plural—it could be referring to the husbands, but could also be referring to a husband and his wife, which seems to me more likely. Praying together is an important activity for any Christian couple, but if their relationship is strained such praying becomes awkward, in fact probably won't even happen.

The golden rule

8Finally, all of you be likeminded, compassionate, loving as brothers,[1] tenderhearted, courteous,[2] **9**not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but instead blessing, knowing that you were called to this so that you may inherit a blessing. **10**For: "The one who wants to love life and to see good days must refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11**he must turn away from evil and do good; he must seek peace, even pursue it. **12**Because the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears *open* to their prayer; but the face of the Lord is against those doing evil."[3]

Better to suffer than to sin

13Now who is he who will harm you if you become imitators of the good?[4] **14**But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "Do not fear what they fear, neither be troubled."[5] **15**Rather, sanctify the Lord God[6] in your hearts, and always be ready with an answer for everyone who asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, with meekness[7] and respect; **16**keeping a good conscience, so that wherein they speak against you as evildoers,[8] those who revile your good way of life in Christ may be put to shame.[9] **17**For it is better to suffer for doing good, should the will of God so determine, than for doing evil.

Christ's example

18Because Christ also suffered on account of sins, once for all,[10] the righteous on behalf of the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God; having been put to death, to be sure, in flesh, but having been made alive in spirit; **19**in which He also went and made a proclamation to the

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1 This list of attitudes refers primarily to relationships within the Christian community.

2 Instead of "courteous", some 22% of the Greek manuscripts, have 'humble' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

3 The quote is from Psalm 34:12-16. Based on this Psalm, the blessing to be inherited is in this life. Without peace life is not 'good'.

4 "The good" is ambiguous as to gender; it could be a good person or a good thing, or a generic good.

5 The quote is from Isaiah 8:12. In that context there is a contrast between Jehovah as the 'fear' of Israel and whatever god the others fear. Whatever 'fear' motivates those who persecute you for doing good, do not let it shake your devotion to the true God.

6 Instead of "God", perhaps 6% of the Greek manuscripts have 'Christ' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

7 'Meek' is not 'weak'—it is power that is restrained, under control. Since the worldview of the Bible is far superior to all others, someone who really understands the issues can smash the opposition, but Peter says not to do that; by handling the questioners gently we have a better chance of converting them. In verse 18 below he will make the point that in this we will be following Christ's example. But remember what Jesus Himself said about 'dogs' and 'pigs' in Matthew 7:6.

8 This clause is a repeat of 2:12.

9 Often such people are put to shame in this life, but if not, they certainly will be at the Judgment.

10 "Once for all"—no one can kill Jesus twice.

spirits in prison[1] **20**who formerly were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, while the Ark was being prepared,[2] in which a few, that is eight, souls were brought safely through water. **21**Its antitype now saves us also,[3] a baptism through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22**who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.[4] (It is not the removal of physical filth, but the appeal into God from a good conscience.)

Some concluding instructions

Pursue the will of God

4 **1**Therefore, since Christ suffered on our behalf[5] in flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mentality (for the one who has 'suffered in flesh' has been made to cease from sin)[6] **2**so as not to live your remaining

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[1] What spirits are these? Peter gives a little more detail in his second letter, 2:4-6. "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction…" So the spirits in question are angels. Jude 6-7 refers to those same angels: "and the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these [angels], having given themselves over to fornication and gone after a different kind of flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Recall that the men of Sodom wanted to rape the angels who were in Lot's house; whatever kind of flesh angels have when they materialize, it is not human flesh, it is precisely a different kind of flesh. So the angels in question are the ones who cohabited with women, producing the mongrel race of *nephilim* (Genesis 6:2-4). Their crime was so terrible that God incarcerated them even before Jehovah the Son became flesh and defeated Satan—they were put in cold (or hot) storage until human history played itself out. So the "proclamation" that Jesus went to make to those spirits was that he had won and that their condemnation was now irreversible.

[2] It probably took Noah at least 100 years.

[3] Just as Noah's Ark saved from destruction by water, being baptized by Jesus saves from destruction by Satan and his subordinates. I take it that "appeal into God from a good conscience" is virtually a synonym for 'believe into Jesus', which is the prerequisite for Jesus to baptize us with the Holy spirit.

[4] I believe that this truth is directly relevant to Ephesians 2:6 (see the footnote there). In Christ we have authority over the hierarchy of fallen angels. [I am still working on how we may interact with the good ones.]

[5] Some 4.5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "on our behalf" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

[6] 3:18 above says Christ was "put to death in flesh", as the culmination of His suffering, and I take that to be the point of reference here. I take 'suffer in flesh' to be a euphemism for death, and when one dies he stops sinning [I suppose]. All during His earthly life Jesus knew He was going to die on account of sins and was totally committed to doing the Father's will. With the same mentality we too will be committed to doing God's will, and so will avoid sin. "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Verse two here agrees that this is not automatic—we must determine not to indulge the flesh.

time in flesh for human lusts any longer, but for the will of God. 3Because the time that has passed is plenty for you[1] to have performed the will of the pagans—having walked in lewdness,[2] lusts, drunkenness, revelries, carousings and disgusting idolatries—4in regard to which they are disagreeably surprised at your not running with them into the same flood of debauchery, reviling you;[3] 5they will give an account to Him who is ready to judge living and dead 6(which is precisely why dead ones were *once* evangelized, that they should be judged as men in flesh, to be sure, but that they should live according to God in spirit).[4]

Redeem the time

7The end of all things has approached; therefore be serious and self-controlled in your praying.[5] 8Above all things your love for one another should be constant, because love covers a multitude of sins.[6] 9Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.[7] 10As each has received a gift, minister it to one another as good administrators of God's varied grace.[8] 11If anyone speaks, let it be according to God's Oracles. If anyone serves, let it be as from strength as God supplies, so that in all things **God** may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

Suffering in the will of God

12Dear ones, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you as a test, as though something strange was happening to you, 13but to the extent that you share in Christ's sufferings,[9] rejoice, so that

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1 The Greek manuscripts are about evenly divided between "you" and 'us', but the best line of transmission has "you", which jives with verse 4.

2 All the nouns in this list are actually plural, emphasizing that their life was characterized by these things. The main ingredients would be alcohol and sex.

3 Is that not precisely the way that people in the world react, when someone breaks out of their circle? They feel condemned, but do not want to admit that they are wrong. Or they know that they are wrong, but do not want to change.

4 This delightful verse has given commentators no end of exercise. Verse 5 ends with "judge living and dead", but anyone who is dead was once alive, obviously, and the judgment will be based on what they did while alive, which is why everyone needs to be evangelized while in this life (including the people who are making fun of us). There is no definite article with "dead", either in verse 5 or 6, so Peter is referring to the ones who were evangelized in this life—he is not saying that <u>everyone</u> has been or will be evangelized. Everyone will be judged, but to "live according to God in spirit" one must respond adequately to the Gospel.

5 Haven't you heard a lot of 'praying' that would not qualify?

6 Love overlooks sins, does not make a big deal out of them, in interpersonal relationships. The eternal consequence of sin is not in view here.

7 Have you never heard anyone grumble? Recall that to be hospitable is commanded.

8 Does your church allow people to minister their gifts?

9 Christ did not suffer for any wrong-doing of His own, so this is not referring to being punished for our own wrong-doing. To share in Christ`s sufferings means that we suffer for what others have done. I suggest that this includes being deliberately mistreated (see verse 14).

at the revelation of His glory you also may rejoice a great deal more.[1]
14If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the
Spirit of the glory and of God has come to rest upon you. On their part
He is blasphemed,[2] but on your part He is glorified.[3] 15Now do not any
of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evildoer, or as a meddler in
others' affairs; 16but if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be
ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter.[4] 17Because the time has
come for judgment to begin at God's house;[5] now if it starts with us, what
will be the end of those who keep disobeying the Gospel of God? 18Also,
'If the righteous one is saved with difficulty, where will the godless and
sinful person appear?'[6] 19And so let those who suffer according to the will
of God entrust their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.[7]

How to be a shepherd

5 1The elders who are among you I exhort, I, the fellow elder and wit-
ness of Christ's sufferings; also the partaker of the glory that is to be
revealed:[8] 2Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as
overseers willingly,[9] not under compulsion; not for dishonest gain but
freely; 3neither as lording it over those entrusted to you,[10] but being
examples to the flock. 4And when the Chief Shepherd is revealed you
will receive the unfading crown of glory.

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1 Presumably the reference is to our rewards; the more we share in Christ's sufferings, the more we get.

2 If someone insults us because of the results of the Holy Spirit's working in our lives, they are blaspheming Him; but we should glorify God for the privilege of belonging to Him, both now and for eternity.

3 Perhaps 17% of the Greek manuscripts omit this whole sentence (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

4 Instead of "matter", perhaps 11% of the Greek manuscripts have 'name' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

5 Dear me, does this mean that the more I call down judgment on the forces of evil at work in the society at large, the more God judges the church? If that is the price to be paid for doing our job (1 John 3:8), so be it. For more on this subject, please see 'Judgment begins at the house of God' in the third edition of my book, *ESSAYS on Discipleship, Missions and Spiritual Warfare* or on my website, www.prunch.org.

6 See Proverbs 11:31 in LXX (Septuagint), which is quite different from the Hebrew Text. However, Peter does not claim to be quoting Scripture here, but used a statement that is true and served his purpose. "Saved with difficulty" does not sound automatic.

7 The bottom line when we are suffering is whether or not we are going to trust God's concern for us.

8 I take it that Peter is referring to his having been on the mount of transfiguration; only James and John could say as much, and presumably they were not among the addressees (James had already been martyred). Peter uses the definite article with "fellow elder" and "partaker", from which I conclude that he is claiming a position of special authority.

9 Perhaps 14% of the Greek manuscripts add 'according to God' (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).

10 How many church leaders do you know who enjoy 'lording'?

Humility is a must

5Similarly, you younger ones, submit to elders. Yes, all of you clothe yourselves with humility, submitting to one another, because 'God resists proud ones, but gives grace to humble ones.'[1] 6Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; 7casting all your care upon Him, because He does the caring for you.[2]

Guard against the devil

8Be sober, stay alert! Because your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, is circling *you*,[3] looking for someone to devour; 9withstand him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.[4]

Benediction

10Now may the God of all grace, who called you into His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, Himself perfect, establish, strengthen and ground you—after you have suffered a while.[5] 11To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Sign-off

12I have written to you briefly by our faithful brother Silvanus,[6] as I consider him, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. 13The jointly elect *sister* in 'Babylon' greets you;[7] and so does Mark, my son.[8]

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[1] See Proverbs 3:34 in LXX, that modifies the Hebrew Text, but again, Peter does not claim to be quoting Scripture.

[2] My rendering follows the best line of transmission; God is offering to handle our concerns for us, so we do not have to—now that is a real deal (but it only works if we hand them over).

[3] He is not ambling aimlessly; he is circling the prey, looking for an opening. I follow the best line of transmission, albeit with only 24% of the Greek manuscripts here.

[4] What does this last clause have to do with withstanding Satan? Well, when we are suffering it is easy to question God's goodness, to think that we are being picked on, to feel sorry for ourselves, and so on—our faith starts to waver and Satan has all sorts of fun. 'Devour' means to gobble up (or gobble down); for a while I lived among a people in the Amazon jungle who used to practice cannibalism—I was assured that human flesh is sweet; now really, would any self-respecting 'lion' turn up his nose at such a treat? But this particular 'lion' is especially fond of devouring Christians.

[5] Oh dear, can't I have all the good stuff without needing to suffer? Guess what the answer is.

[6] This may be the same Silvanus who is mentioned in the opening verse of both Thessalonian epistles. If so, he was a man of some importance in the Church at that time. Evidently he was entrusted with the responsibility of delivering this letter; if he personally had to go to each province, he had quite a journey.

[7] Almost half the Greek manuscripts have a postscript that the letter was written in Rome, and it seems likely that such was the case. So 'Babylon' presumably refers to Rome. (So far as I know, the historical Babylon was a ruin at that time, without inhabitants.) The 'sister' could be an individual woman, but could also be the church.

[8] Presumably Peter is referring to John Mark (Acts 12 & 15, Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11), whom he took under his wing, as it were. This is the Mark who wrote the second

14Greet one another with a kiss of love.[1]
Peace be to you, all who are in Christ Jesus.[2] Amen.

Gospel. Many Greek manuscripts have a scribal comment that Mark wrote his Gospel with Peter at his elbow.

[1] The love here is *agape*, not *philia*. What is involved is genuine concern for the other's well-being, not an emotional interest.

[2] If you are not in Christ Jesus you cannot expect peace. Perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts omit "Jesus" (as in NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.).