

1 Peter 2 Notes

Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Great Salvation (1:3-2:10)

- The consequences of their salvation (1:13-2:10).
 - The priority of the word (2:1-3).
 - God's word was the source of salvation (2 Timothy 3:15) because His grace worked through the word to create new life (James 1:18; cf. John 20:31; Romans 10:17).
 - Clinging to sins drives one in the opposite direction from the truth that exposes and confronts sin and demands righteousness. In ancient baptismal ceremonies, those being baptized customarily took off and discarded the clothes they wore to the ceremony. Following their baptisms, they put on new robes they received from the church. Exchanging clothes symbolized the reality of laying aside the old life and taking up the new (Ephesians 4:24).
 - Peter's list of specific sins is not exhaustive, but certainly is representative of evil. When one puts away these sins, it clears the way for an unhindered desire for the truth of God.
 - Peter compares the strength of the longing for divine revelation to the singular and dominant desire of newborn babies. The word indicates an intense, recurring, insatiable desire or passion. His exhortation for us to grow through the word strongly implies the necessity of discontent with the present condition of spiritual development.
 - Since his readers had tasted or experienced the kindness of the Lord during their conversion, they should have desired more of that goodness through feeding on His word (Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:140-142).
 - The priesthood of believers (2:4-10).
 - We draw near to Christ in an intimate, abiding, personal fellowship (cf. Hebrews 4:15; 7:25; 10:22). The imagery of a "stone" is frequently used in scripture. This "stone" was perfectly designed, shaped, and hewn out to become the cornerstone of the church (Ephesians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 3:11). Christ is a "living stone" because He is alive forever and because He gives life to all.
 - "Rejected" means "rejected after having been examined or tested." The Jews rejected Him with great contempt and hatred. Even though He has been rejected by men, He is "chosen" and "precious" in the sight of God.
 - We are untied with Christ as stones in a spiritual building of which he is the cornerstone. We have become partakers of the divine na-

ture (Colossians 3:3-4). The foundation of this spiritual building is the apostles' doctrine (cf. Acts 2:42; Hebrews 3:6). We constitute God's spiritual temple (Acts 17:24; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Timothy 3:15).

- The main task of the Old Testament priests was the offering of material, animal sacrifices, all of which pointed to Christ's great sacrifice. The scriptures are full of references to the offerings of "priests." The Old Testament spoke of the offerings of prayer, thanksgiving, praise, and repentance (Psalm 50:14; 51:19; 107:22; 141:2) in addition to material sacrifices and offerings. Now there remains only spiritual sacrifices for God's holy priesthood (Philippians 2:17; 4:18; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15; 2 Timothy 4:6).
- God, through the prophet, called His people to behold or view the Messiah as the special stone that the Father Himself had laid in Zion. Christ is uniquely fitted for His task (cf. 1 Kings 6:7). The corner stone set all the angles for the rest of the building. To ensure perfect precision of God's spiritual house, the main cornerstone had to be flawless.
- The word "ashamed" denotes being deceived in some confidence, or placing hope in someone and having that hope dashed. Those who sincerely believe and obey Christ will never know any disappointment from Him.
- Christians belong to God because He bought them at the ultimate price (1 Peter 1:18-19; cf. 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Hebrews 13:12; Revelation 5:9). Intellectual darkness is ignorance -- the inability to see and know the truth. Moral darkness is immorality -- the inability to see and do what is right. The darkness Peter refers to here is the second type -- the sinful state of unbelievers who are trapped in the spiritual darkness of Satan. Lots of people regrettably love the darkness (John 3:19-20).

Suffering Christians Should Remember Their Example Before Men (2:11-4:6)

- Living honorably before unbelievers (2:11-3:7).
 - Submission in the civic realm (2:11-17).
 - As spiritual foreigners, Christians must shun the evil found in the world. "Strangers" literally means "alongside the house." The word came to denote any person who lives in a country not his own and is therefore a foreigner. The term fits Christians who do not belong to this world's system but live alongside those who do.

- “Wage war” is a strong term that generally means to carry out a long-term military campaign. It implies not just antagonism, but a relentless, malicious aggression.
- In order to effectively evangelize, Christians’ transformed inner lives must be visible to the outside world. Peter thus commanded his reader to keep their behavior at a high cost. “Honest” means “beautiful of outward form.”
- In the first century, the label “evildoers” brought to mind many of the specific accusations pagans made against Christians -- that they rebelled against the Roman government, practiced cannibalism, engaged in incest, engaged in subversive activities that threatened the Empire’s economic and social progress, opposed slavery, and practiced atheism by not worshiping Caesar or the Roman gods.
- “Submit yourselves” is a military expression literally meaning “to arrange in formation under the commander.” Those who do so desire to honor the Lord (Psalm 119:12-13, 33; Acts 13:48; 1 Corinthians 10:31). Jesus lived under the unjust and unrighteous rule of the Jewish and Roman authorities, yet He never opposed their right to rule and He never sought to overturn their authority.
- Peter elaborates on the extent of Christians’ submission by noting that it applies to all levels of authority. Peter even recognizes the legitimacy of one-man rule as a form of God-ordained government. The purposes of government include the restraint of evil, the promotion of the public good, and the punishment of wrongdoing.
- The reason Christians ought to submit to every authority is quite clear and basic -- such conduct stops the mouths of the gospel’s critics. The word for “ignorance” indicates a willful, hostile rejection of the truth (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:34). It is a settled lack of spiritual perception that the apostle further characterized as “foolish.” Integrity, impeccable moral fiber, and purity of life are all effective character tools to muzzle the enemies of the gospel.
- The spiritual freedom we enjoy in Christ is not to be used as a covering for evil in not submitting to rulers. We cannot abuse or disregard the standards of conduct God has established for them on earth.
- Every person was created in God’s image. Therefore, we must show them the proper respect. Christians must also show the world that they love their fellow Christians (John 13:34-35; 15:12; 1 John 3:23; 4:7, 21; 5:1). The agent for carrying out the purposes of government -- monarch, president, premier, or prime minister -- is worthy of the respect God mandates.

- Submission in the workplace (2:18-25).
 - There were few protections, and virtually no rights, for slaves, who were considered property rather than persons. Aristotle wrote, "A slave is a living tool, and a tool is an inanimate slave." Under apostolic teaching, the early Christians developed strong and correct convictions on the slavery issue.
 - The submission of servants was to be rendered with all respect, that is, without bitterness or negativity, but with an attitude of gracious honor. It did not matter if the masters were good or bad.
 - God is pleased when Christians do their work in a humble and submissive way for their superiors. Undoubtedly many recipients of this epistle endured painful and unjust beatings as slaves. When they endured it, they showed that it was more important to demonstrate their submission to God's sovereignty in every area of life than protesting against problems at their workplace. Whenever Christians encounter trials on the job, they ought to view them as opportunities for spiritual growth and evangelism.
 - Christ's redemptive suffering as the one sacrifice for sin has no parallel in His followers' sufferings. But there are features of His suffering that do provide an example for them to follow in their own sufferings. The word "example" literally means "writing under" and refers to a pattern placed under a sheet of tracing paper so the original images could be duplicated.
 - Whereas the KJV uses the term "violence" in Isaiah 53:9, Peter uses the word "sin." Sin is truly violence against God and His law. The heart of man expresses sin most easily and often through the mouth (Isaiah 6:5). "Reviled" means to use abusive, vile language over and over against someone, or "to pile abuse on someone."
 - Christ died for sinners to separate them from sin's penalty, so it can never condemn them. "Wounds" is a better word to use than "stripes" or "scourging" because the latter may give the impression that the beating of Jesus produced salvation. "Shepherd" denotes a feeder, protector, leader, cleanser, and restorer. "Guardian" is a synonym for "bishop" or "overseer."