

LESSONS FROM SAINT PETER



A Course for Correspondence Study

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INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read the first lesson once. Read it again making sure you understand each paragraph.

2. If you have a New Testament, look up the verses in each lesson. It is not necessary to have a New Testament to understand or answer the questions, as the verses are included in the lesson. However, it is always good to check out the verses in your New Testament. If you have not received a New Testament, you may receive one by requesting it.

In the lesson, the New Testament texts are indicated by giving the name of the book, the chapter and the verse. In order to find the Scripture text, look first in the index of the New Testament to find the page number for the beginning of the book. The majority of the books are divided into chapters that are approximately one page in length. Each chapter is divided into verses that more or less make up a clause. For example: Suppose we wanted to find I Peter 1:18. There are two books written by Peter. You would need to find the page number where this book begins. The teaching that you are looking for would be in Chapter One, verse 18.

3. When you have read the lesson, answer the questions in the exam and send them to the address from which you received the course. It will be corrected and sent back to you.

4. If you have questions, write them out and include them with the exams.

5. Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you understand and obey the Scriptures. If you have learned a new truth from the Word of God, share it with others. If you like the courses, invite others to study. In order to evade controversies, we will only use Scriptural terms in the lessons. Also, private interpretations will not be given. The student should meditate on the Scripture verses that are mentioned and answer the questions on the basis of a literal interpretation of the Scriptures. Do not answer the questions according to what you think or have always believed. The questions are presented to see if you understand the Scripture verses in the lesson. The major question is: What did Peter, and other writers of the Word of God, say about this subject or theme? We recommend that you learn what the Scriptures say and answer according to the teaching of the Scriptures.

SAINT PETER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

“Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.” Luke 5:4.

This is what the Lord Jesus said to Simon Peter. Christ had used his boat from which to teach. Peter and his fellow fishermen had fished all night without catching anything. Now, with the sun high in the sky, the Master tests Peter again. The Sea of Galilee was a good place for fishermen. There were many cities on its shores and many men made their living fishing with nets in the waters.

Simon Peter lived in Bethsaida and he usually fished with Andrew, his brother. One day Andrew heard John the Baptist point out Jesus, saying: “Behold the Lamb of God.” John 1:29.

Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus gave him a new name, Cephas, which means “stones.” In the Scriptures the rock is a type or sign of Christ. In this way the Lord Jesus, by giving this name, revealed the fact that Simon would be a son of God. He would be made a partaker of the Divine Nature. I Peter 1:4. Now the Lord was to try him again with a command.

When Peter and the others obeyed, they caught a great quantity of fish. Peter was so surprised that he said to Jesus: “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Luke 5:8. However, the Lord Jesus told Peter he would become a fisher of men and later would be one of the twelve apostles. (Luke 6:14).

As a result Peter had the privilege of living three years with the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the highlights in the life of Peter was when he confessed Christ as the Son of God. Jesus had asked His disciples what people said about Him. Some said He was John the Baptist, others that he was Elijah and others said He was Jeremiah.

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Matthew 16:15,16.

The Lord praised Peter for this, because it was a revelation from the Father. The Lord then promised He, not Peter, would build His Church.

Peter’s words were not always directed by the Lord. In the same chapter the Lord taught His disciples that it was necessary for Him to die and be raised on the third day. Peter could not understand how the Son of God, the King of Israel could be put to death. Then Peter began to rebuke Him, saying, “Be it far from the Lord: this shall not be unto Thee.” The Lord turned and said to Peter: “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Matthew 16:22, 23.

This was not the only occasion in which Peter erred in his sayings. When the Lord was transfigured and Moses and Elijah appeared with Him, Peter said: “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” Matthew 17:4.

Peter wanted to honor Christ together with Moses and Elijah. God, however, will not permit a person to be placed on the same level with His Son.

God spoke directly from heaven in rebuke:

“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” Matthew 17:5.

All the way up to the end of His life on earth, Christ taught that He would be arrested and that all would flee. Peter just could not believe himself to be capable of such cowardice. Even though all the others would forsake Jesus, Peter would not. This was when the Lord pronounced the famous words:

“Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.” Matthew 26:34,35.

They then went to the garden of Gethsemane where the Lord went apart to pray. He left the disciples to watch and wait, but they went to sleep.

The Lord said, “The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:41.

When the crowd came to arrest Jesus, Peter still thought Christ should defend himself so he cut off the ear of a man. Jesus healed the man. It was then that all the disciples fled and Peter followed at a distance.

Christ was taken to the palace of the high priest. There the priests accused Him and spit in His face. Christ was insulted and hit and beaten.

Peter sat with a crowd of curious people around a fire. There he denied the Lord three times. It was then that the cock crew and the Lord turned and gazed on Peter. Peter remembered the words of the Lord and went out from the crowd and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:60-62).

It was in this manner that the Lord went alone to the cross. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” I Peter 2:24.

He cried out: “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46.

God had placed all of our sin on His Son. Christ then exclaimed: “It is finished.” John 19:30.

This meant that everything necessary to save mankind had been done. The Lord Jesus bowed His head and died.

On the third day, He was raised from the dead. Peter and John went to the tomb and found it empty. It was then, that they understood. (John 20:8). Later the Lord forgave Peter and restored him to service with the commission to feed His sheep. (John 21:15-17).

We have seen that Simon Peter, the son of John, was a great man. He was a man, a human being, with many weaknesses - yet he became great. He was made great by drawing near to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter called himself a sinner. His sins were pardoned because of his faith in Christ. This is the only basis that the Lord pardons the sin of anyone.

Christ died and finished His work. I believe it. That is enough.

However, Peter, was more than a forgiven sinner. He later was an apostle that the Holy Spirit used. It is essential that we hear what Peter has to say. Throughout this course we will consider what Peter said and wrote while on earth. He still says the same things today. May all men hear and believe what Peter has to say!

SAINT PETER AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

QUOTE: “Encourage, therefore; and help those devout associations whose purpose is to spread among the faithful the Holy Scriptures, principally the Gospels, and try with all zeal, that its daily reading be done among the Christian families.” Thus said The Most Holy Pontiff Pius XII in his discourse given in Rome the 30th of September of 1943.

True Christians have always believed in the inspiration and total, absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures. But, what does Saint Peter say about the Scriptures? We have seen that Peter was a great man because he had been with the Lord Jesus Christ. Many people today do not believe that the Bible is inspired or that it is sufficient in every way. What did Saint Peter say? What would he say if he were here today?

I. PETER QUOTED THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Apostle Peter preached many times in Jerusalem and Caesarea. His messages are found in Acts Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11 and 15. Seven times in the first four chapters Peter quotes the Old Testament authors; Moses, David and Joel. Peter believed those men were inspired by God and quotes them to prove his conviction.

“But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.” Acts 3:18.

Peter not only preached the Gospel several times in the New Testament but also wrote two letters in the New Testament. In these two letters in the New Testament Peter cites nine quotations from the Old Testament (Leviticus, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah). Peter never quoted from any other books or sources. Peter did what the Lord Jesus did very often --- referred to the authority of the Old Testament by using it in his teaching and preaching. The Lord Jesus Christ and most of the authors of the New Testament spoke of the Old Testament as being inspired of God.

II. PETER BELIEVED IN THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

One day Peter, Matthew and John, and the other disciples were with the Lord Jesus. He taught them many things that would take place after His death. In the Gospel of John, chapters 14, 15 and 16, we read of these things. The Lord taught Peter and the others that He would send His Spirit to dwell with them. Christ also taught that the Holy Spirit would give the

New Testament. Now, we have the New Testament and it is divided in three sections.

Jesus said: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” John 14:26.

The Holy Spirit helped the Apostles to write down the Words of Christ. Matthew and John were present when most of the events occurred. Mark was an eye-witness to the latter part of the earthly ministry of Christ. It is believed that Peter helped him with some of the accounts in the Gospel of Mark. Others assisted Luke, but all wrote just exactly as the Holy Spirit of God led and inspired.

“When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all Truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come.” John 16:13.

Here the Lord promised His disciples that they would know the Truth. This Truth has been given to us in the 21 letters of the New Testament. Peter, James, John and Jude were with the Lord. Paul, the author of 14 letters, was converted at a later date.

In John 16:13 Christ also said that the Holy Spirit would “shew you things to come.” The Revelation, written by John, speaks especially of future happenings. Peter also wrote of things to come.

III. PETER TAUGHT THAT THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED.

Not only did Peter refer to Old Testament passages as inspired, he also taught the truth of inspiration. “Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto you: Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow.” I Peter 1:10,11. This teaches clearly that the Holy Spirit guided the prophets in what they wrote, even when they did not understand everything. Christ also said of the Holy Spirit:

“He shall glorify me.” John 16:14.

We should always look for figures, symbols and types of Christ when we read the Old Testament.

In his second letter, the Apostle Peter teaches, “We have also a more sure Word of prophecy.” He was referring to the fact that the written Word was even more important than His spoken Word.

“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” II Peter 1:20,21.

On one occasion the Apostle Paul had to rebuke Peter. Both Paul and Peter preached that salvation is by Grace. However, some Jerusalem Jews followed after Paul saying that it was necessary to do certain things in order to be saved. Peter had been afraid of these Jews. Paul had said:

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” Galatians 2:11,12,14.

The Apostle Peter realized that Paul was right. It is of utmost importance to never give any reason that might make people believe they can be saved by their good works. Later Peter spoke highly of Paul and his letters. Actually, Peter put the writings of Paul on the same level as the rest of the Scriptures.

LESSON 3

SAINT PETER PREACHES HIS FIRST SERMON

“For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.” Acts 2:15.

This was Peter’s answer to the people of Jerusalem when they accused the disciples of being drunk. Actually they were full of the Holy Spirit, but these people could not understand it.

Many today make fun of Christians. Others are simply indifferent and eternal things are just not important to them. Not everything of a religious nature is the truth. There are many that profess to be servants of God who live very wickedly. The only way to really know is by the Word of God. As we have seen, all that are true Christians believe that the Bible is inspired, is infallible and is completely sufficient in itself, as Peter believed.

What really happened on this day in Acts chapter two? The Lord had promised:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scriptures hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” John 7:37-39.

For every individual there are three steps:

1. Come to Christ.
2. Drink of the Water of Life.
3. Let the Truth flow to others.

There are three great events that had to take place first.

1. Christ had to be glorified.
2. The Spirit had to be given.
3. The believers had to receive the Spirit.

Several times Christ had promised to send His Spirit. He promised to pray that the Holy Spirit might be given:

“And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.” John 14:16.

These promises were fulfilled fifty days after the death of Christ. The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

Peter and the other Apostles were witnesses to the resurrection of Christ from the dead. They saw Him and heard His Words for forty days before He returned to heaven. It was not enough that the Son arose from the dead. The

Father had determined that His Son would be glorified. Note that what mankind did to Christ, God the Father counteracted.

Man rejected the Son...God received the Son.

Man took His life...God restored His life.

Man insulted Him...God honored Him.

Man hanged Him on a cross...God put Him on a throne.

So when Christ was glorified and seated on the right hand of the Father, the Holy Spirit was sent or given on the day of Pentecost. The prerequisite given to the disciples was that of waiting. The Spirit had descended in the form of a dove upon the Lord in Matthew 3:16. On the day of Pentecost “there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire.” Also “there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind.” “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:4.

Some of the people present that day in Jerusalem were ignorant of the power of God, and mistakenly thought the disciples were drunk. Peter stood and answered that it was only nine in the morning. (Acts 9:15). He then proceeded to explain from the Scriptures what had really happened. First Peter repeated the words of the Prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” Acts 2:17.

Peter then preached Christ to all that were present. “Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you as ye yourselves also know; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be beholden of it.” Acts 2:22-24.

Hundreds of years before, David had said: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” Acts 2:27; Psalms 16:10.

Explaining this, Peter affirmed that the body of David was in the tomb and certainly already in a state of decomposition. David, writing by Divine Inspiration, was speaking of the body of Christ. Christ's body had been in the tomb but did not experience corruption. David also, hundreds of years before, pronounced what God would say to His Son: “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make Thy foes Thy footstool.” Acts 2:34,35.

When Christ had finished His work, God told Him to sit where He would glorify Him. Christ is now seated on the right hand of God the Father. His enemies will bow down to Him.

The sermon of Peter impressed the people. They were touched and convicted in their hearts and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” Peter proclaimed:

“repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” Acts 2:38.

Three thousand people responded in repentance and faith. God pardoned their sins and they received the Holy Spirit. God is ready to do the same today.

Many people are baptized without repenting of their sins. Repentance is more important than baptism. The thief on the cross repented of his sins but was not baptized.

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Luke 23:43.

Today you can rejoice in the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again from the dead. He lives and is seated on the right of His Father.

Why did Christ send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts? The work of the Holy Spirit is to keep us from sin. The Lord Jesus not only pardons our sin when we repent and believe but also keeps us from falling into sin. The Lord not only saves us from the penalty of sin but also saves from the power of sin. “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Romans 6:14.

This is very important. I realize that I am a sinner, rebellious before God, and that my sins will send me to Hell. I repent and cry out to God for pardon and forgiveness. God can forgive me because Christ took upon Himself my punishment. But many times our joy turns to sadness because we yield to sin again. It is not God’s will that we practice sin. He gives us His Spirit to help us in the time of temptation. This salvation can be yours today through Christ. Why not accept Him now?

SAINT PETER AND THE PRIESTS

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” Acts 3:6.

As Peter said these words, he took the lame man by the right hand and lifted him up. Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. He began to leap and walk and praise God.

After the extraordinary events of Acts chapter 3, Peter and John went to the Temple to pray. They saw this man who had been lame from birth. He was begging alms when Peter passed and was instrumental in his healing.

This great miracle caused much excitement and brought together a great crowd of people. Peter took advantage of the opportunity to preach and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He testified that it was not their own power that brought about the healing.

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. And His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” Acts 3:13-16.

The Apostle Peter, inspired by God, focuses on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the One whom God the Father delights to honor and God allowed this miracle to glorify His Son. Peter, calling on the name of Jesus, told the man to rise and walk. To the crowd, Peter announced that the miracle was done in Christ's Name; “through faith in His Name.” The crowd was given the Good News. If they would repent and be converted, their sins would be wiped away. Many were heavy in spirit because of their sins. A just God has to punish those who break His Laws. But Peter, with the authority of God, tells them that their sins can be completely done away with. How could this be? Peter did not say they could suffer a while and thus pay for their sins. Peter simply says: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Acts 3:19. God can do this because of what Christ did on the cross. We shall continue to learn more about the salvation God offers.

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and the priests did not like to be accused of the death of the Son of God. As a result Peter and John were arrested and put in jail. Those who do not want to listen to the truth always find it easy to turn to violence to shut the mouth of those that preach.

The next day the high priest questioned Peter and John: “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.” Acts 4:7,8,10. Peter does not stop with just exalting the Name of Jesus. He asserts that salvation cannot be found in any other name.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other Name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12.

Christ is the only one that was crucified for our sins; the only One Who was raised from the dead for our sins. Peter pointedly declares to all that salvation cannot be found in any other name - be it man, woman, saint, angel or even in Peter himself. If Peter were in the world today, he would still declare the same truth and the same message. He was inspired by God on that occasion and continues to speak to us through the Bible with the same message today. After the death of some men it has been discovered that they were in error and did not speak the truth. However, because Peter was inspired by God there is no contradiction in his message.

“Jesus saith, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” John 14:6.

There is no person, regardless how great a sinner, that cannot be saved by the power of Christ. The priests were responsible for the death of Christ but they could have been saved. They would not recognize Him as the Saviour of the world. The Name of Christ is sufficient to save whosoever will come to Him today. We do not need someone or something else. Christ can save today! Do you believe in Him?

“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.” I Timothy 2:5.

As there is only one Saviour, Christ Jesus, so there is only one Mediator, Christ Jesus. He is perfect and all-sufficient. Christ is able or adequate - thus there is no need for His mother, a saint or an angel to intervene to Him. Christ in heaven now is our Mediator, Intercessor and Advocate-Attorney.

As Mediator He brings men to God. Because of sin, no man can appear before God. But CHRIST, who was perfect man and God, takes our cause and case before God the Father. He understands us and our need. We do not need anyone else to take us to God. He is the **ONLY ONE** that can.

If you will come to Christ, He will make you a child of God. You will receive a new nature that will cause you to want to please God. Daily help is necessary or we will return to sin. For this reason the intercession of Christ is important:

1. He can help.

“Wherefore in all things, it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:17.

2. He lives for this purpose.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Hebrews 7:25.

Christ is now in the presence of the Father making intercession for us. He never has to rest or sleep and is always watching over us.

But what happens if we sin? “And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.” I John 2:1.

John, the inspired Apostle, did not say that if we sin we would lose our salvation. If we sin, we have an attorney that represents us before the Father and pleads our case. He is praying for us. He is the perfect, spotless Son of God who is complete, all-sufficient and all-powerful. He does not need any help. He is perfectly capable and able. **NO ONE ELSE IS NECESSARY.** He can and does save from the penalty and the power of sin.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31.
WHY DO YOU WAIT?

SAINT PETER AND THE BLESSED MOTHER

Mary, the mother of our Lord, enjoyed a truly blessed position. She was chosen by God to be mother of the Lord Jesus. Gabriel, the angel, was sent to reveal to her what was to happen.

“And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.” Luke 1:30-32.

Mary asked how this could be as she was a virgin. The angel explained that the child would be conceived by the Holy Ghost. Her answer was:

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy Word..” Luke 1:38.

Afterward, she went to see Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. When Elizabeth saw Mary she cried out loudly:

“Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?” Like 1:42,43.

Mary’s answer was:

“My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” Luke 1:46,47.

From these verses we learn that God honored Mary; Gabriel honored Mary and Elizabeth honored Mary. Mary glorified God and called Him her Savior.

In calling God or Christ Saviour, Mary did exactly what Peter did (Acts 5:31); what Paul did (Acts 13:23); what John did (I John 4:4); and what Jude did (verse 25) Every human being needs a Saviour and Christ is the Saviour of all and for all.

I. PETER AND MARY

Did Peter ever speak with Mary? We know that on many occasions they were together but none of their conversations are recorded in the New Testament.

- A. On one occasion Christ, His mother and the disciples were invited to a marriage. The wine ran out and the people wanted more. Mary advised Christ of the need and He replied: “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” John 2:4,5.

In this narrative we see:

1. Mary did not perform any miracle.
2. Peter was not asked to do any miracle.
3. Mary gave very correct counsel to the servants. “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.”

All of us would do well to follow that same counsel of the blessed mother. If Mary were here today, she would say the same thing. She would direct and point all to Christ.

Are you ready to obey the Lord? First, one has to discover what He has to say before you can know what to do! This knowledge comes from the Scriptures, the Word of God.

- B. On another occasion, Christ was very busy teaching His disciples. Mary, His mother, and His brothers came and called for Him. The people relayed the message and Christ responded: “Who is my mother, or my brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and mother.” Mark 3:33-35.

The Lord did not say Peter and the other disciples were closer to Him than Mary. He was saying that it was important to do the will of God. The great passion of the Lord Jesus Christ was to do the will of His Father. “Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God.” Hebrews 10:9.

The men and women that do the will of God are called by Christ, brother, sister, and mother.

- C. Peter and Mary were together when the Lord rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. Acts 1:13 we see that Peter and the Apostles were together in an upper room; “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.” Acts 1:14.

This is the last time Mary is mentioned in the Bible. We see Peter and read his writing many times but not one New Testament writer ever mentions Mary again. Peter’s purpose in writing to the Churches was to teach them about the Lord and to whom they should pray and obey. Again we repeat, Mary was not mentioned in this instruction.

II. JESUS AND MARY

What did Jesus say to Mary? When Christ was a boy of twelve, He went to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary. When they left to return to Nazareth, Jesus stayed behind in the Temple, without the knowledge of Joseph and Mary. Three days later they found Him in the Temple, conversing with the Doctors. Mary said: “Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.” Luke 2:48.

Jesus answered: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49.

The Lord was not dishonoring His mother but obeying and glorifying His Father in heaven. Jesus returned to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and was submitted to them.

We have seen that the Lord said that those who do the will of God the Father are highly esteemed by Him. You will notice that while Jesus was agonizing on the cross He did not forget His mother. He commended her to the Apostle John for her welfare. (John 19:26,27). John was to take her as if she were his mother and provide for her. John gladly did this.

After His death and His resurrection, Christ ascended to heaven and is now seated on the right of His Father. His work on earth was finished and now His work in heaven is to intercede for those who have believed upon Him. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Hebrews 7:25

Christ is now our Advocate and Mediator. There is none other nor is another needed. He is capable of doing everything that is necessary for our salvation and our safe-keeping.

HOW TO BECOME A CHILD OF GOD AND KNOW IT!

Would you like to become a child of God and know it? It is possible to be born into the family of God. We will now see what Peter has to say about this subject.

I. HOW CAN ONE BECOME A CHILD OF GOD?

It is only reasonable that God alone can make someone His child. We cannot become a child of God on our own. This position or relationship cannot be bought with money or earned by good works. Neither is a person a child of God simply by reason of human birth. One becomes a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ. "For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Galations 3:26.

- A. The Apostle Peter said: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." I Peter 1:3. To be begotten means to be born again. Every person born into this world possesses the life of his parents. This allows him to live in this world. Heaven is different and we need a different kind of life to live there. This life is received only as a gift from God. "For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.
- B. To be born again, with new life, comes first by the Scriptures, the Word of God. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. But the Word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." I Peter 1:23,25. Here Peter affirms that we are born again by the incorruptible Word of God. If this is true, then I should;
 1. Read the Scriptures, the Word of God. We have already seen that Peter believed and taught that the Scriptures were the inspired Word of God. "Blessed is he that readeth." Revelation 1:3.. "Till I come, give attendance to reading." I Timothy 4:13. If we read the Scriptures carefully and prayerfully, God will speak to us through them.
 2. Believe the Scriptures and their teachings! Many people read the Bible but really do not believe it or obey it. The Lord Jesus said; "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." John 13:17.

3. Accept Christ as your only and all-sufficient, personal Savior. Christ is also called the Word of God. (John 1:1). If we receive Him and believe in His Name, He will make us a child of God. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:11-13.

II. WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WHEN ONE ACCEPTS CHRIST?

Once, in a time of war, all the children of a king were killed except one. A nurse-maid rescued the small child and ran with him to a safe place. When he grew up, he was informed that he was a child of the king. At first he could not believe it. Papers, documents and books were presented which proved that he truly was a child of the king. This realization filled him with joy and peace.

How can I be sure that I am a child of the King?

- A. If I am depending on my works, I will never be sure or secure. Our works are not acceptable unto God. “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” Romans 3:20.
- B. If I am depending on the finished work of Christ, I can be sure and secure. The work of Christ is complete and perfect. It was finished a long time ago. Christ Himself said a few minutes before His death “It is finished.” By this it is meant that everything that was necessary to satisfy our sins before a thrice Holy God, was done by Christ. God was very pleased with what Christ did on the cross and accepted that work. It was demonstrated by His raising His Son from the dead.

Does God want us to know this? Yes! John said: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” I John 5:13.

Peace and joy come with the security of our salvation. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1,2.

Peter said; “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” I Peter 1:5.

God is perfectly capable of keeping and guarding us. We do not have to depend upon ourselves to maintain our salvation or to keep ourselves saved.

III. WHAT HAPPENS IF A CHILD OF GOD FALLS INTO SIN?

If I am saved by the finished work of Christ, then that means I did nothing, aside from receiving Christ, to obtain my salvation. Now that I am saved, God expects me to obey Him and behave myself as a child of God. If I am disobedient, He will punish me. When I believed on Christ, He gave me joy and peace at that time. Sin will take away that joy and peace but it does not take away my relationship with Him as a child.

- A. We are saved by GRACE and not works. “For by GRACE are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians 2:8,9.
- B. A saved person should produce good works because of salvation - not for salvation. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10.
- C. If we are not obedient, God will punish or discipline us. “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” Hebrews 12:6. We should not return to our old sin or life-style. Peter said of those who go to their old way of life: “The dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” II Peter 2:22. It is a marvelous fact to be a child of God and know it. As a child, I have a loving, heavenly Father. I have a home in heaven where Christ will receive me. I have brothers and sisters in the family of God. God cares for His children. He wants them to be happy. Accept Christ in your heart today and you will be made a true child of God. Meditate on the Bible verses of this lesson and believe them.

HOW TO BECOME A PRIEST AND A SAINT!

We have seen in the previous lesson how one can become a child of God. It is simply by the Word of God and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we will consider what Peter said through the Scriptures about who and how a person becomes a priest. Paul and other New Testament writers also have much to say about this theme. We will not be able to consider all the Bible verses.

The Holy Scriptures are inspired of God. They contain the truth and only the truth. There can be no contradiction as all of the Holy Bible is the truth of God. This is one of the proofs that the Bible is the Word of God. Therefore we can consider what all the writers have to say about a subject without fear of their not being in agreement.

I. HOW TO BECOME A PRIEST!

What did Peter teach about the priests? “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Peter 2:5,9.

These are the only verses in which Peter speaks of the priesthood. He addresses those to whom he is writing as: a holy priesthood, and a royal priesthood.

The word “holy” means that the priesthood is composed only of saints.

The word “royal” means the priesthood is composed only of kings.

A holy priesthood has a special place before God.

A royal priesthood has a special place among men.

Peter says a holy priest should offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Peter also says that a royal priesthood should announce to the world the praises of Him who called them from darkness to light.

How can we offer spiritual sacrifices?

“By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name.” Hebrews 13:15. All who love the Lord Jesus Christ can praise God with their lips and heart. All

saved people can manifest the praise of God to the men and women of the world.

Those to whom Peter was writing are called:

“Begotten” or born again ----- I Peter 1:3

“Kept by the power of God” ----- I Peter 1:5.

“Whom having not seen ye love” ----- I Peter 1:8.

“Redeemed” ----- I Peter 1:18.

These statements are true for all believers. Peter also calls all believers saints. This is the truth and is an absolute certainty.

A priest is a person who has a special position before God. In the Old Testament certain men were dedicated to this priestly position. In the Tabernacle in the desert only the priests could enter the Holy Place. Also, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and that was only once a year.

In the book of Hebrews we learn that Christ is our High Priest. “Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” Hebrews 4:14.

He made it possible for us to have direct access to the presence of God. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God.” Hebrews 10:19,20.

Peter teaches exactly the same thing. He says that Christ suffered for our sins so that He might bring us to God. “For Christ also hath suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” I Peter 3:18.

Every child of God now is a priest of God. In the Old Testament only those born into the family of Aaron could be priests. Now everyone that is born into the family of God by the new birth in Christ are priests.

If Christ is my Saviour, He is also my High Priest. I should draw near to God in spirit and offer Him praise and worship for having given His Son to die for me. I should go to the world and tell them the glories of Christ. This should be a reality in my life. My life should reveal to the world the love of God. In my own words I can tell about the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior for sinners.

II. HOW TO BE A SAINT!

Peter teaches that all believers in Christ are priests. Paul teaches that all believers in Christ are saints. This is clearly revealed in Paul’s letter to Rome, as well as in many of his other letters. “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.” Romans 1:7.

Paul teaches that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for the saints and helps us in our weakness. “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;

for we know not what we should pray as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26,27.

Paul also exhorts us to help fellow believers and to be hospitable. “Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality.” Romans 12:13. Peter spoke of helping Christians in need: “Use hospitality one to another without grudging.” I Peter 4:9.

The Apostle Paul took a gift of money from the believers in Macedonia and Achaia to the saints in Jerusalem. (Romans 15:25-26,31). He also instructed the Roman Christians to receive Phoebe as saints should. (Romans 16:2). The word “saints” refers to all the believers in one of these Churches and not just a select few or a special group.

Our Lord taught it as a doctrine and Peter said that it is the work of the Holy Spirit. In His intercessory prayer in John 17, Christ prayed: “Sanctify them through Thy Word, Thy Word is Truth.” John 17:17

Sanctify means to set apart or make holy. God makes us saints by His Truth, His Word. If you receive the Truth of the Son of God, and trust him as your personal Saviour, God will sanctify you and make you a saint positionally before Him.

We have already seen that Peter was speaking to the people of God. About them he said: “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” I Peter 1:2.

A saint is one who has received Jesus Christ as his Saviour and has now been set apart by God for Himself.

Sanctification is the daily, continuing work of the Holy Spirit, in conforming us to the image of Christ.

God pardons our sins because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. The Holy Spirit comes to indwell our hearts and purifies us through the Word of God.

Peter says we should conduct ourselves like saints and be holy in our living. “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; For I am holy.” I Peter 1:15-16. “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.” II Peter 3:11.

Therefore, in order to be a saint (set apart by God), one must believe the Truth about Christ and accept Him as Savior. The Holy Spirit will do the work of sanctification and help us to live and behave in a manner that is consistent to the Christian life and walk of a believer.

CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD AND BISHOP

We have seen in other lessons that Christ is our Mediator, our Intercessor and our Advocate. In this lesson we will learn that Peter called Christ our Shepherd and our Bishop.

“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously: Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” I Peter 2:21-25.

I. CHRIST IS OUR SHEPHERD

A shepherd is one who cares for sheep. If Christ is the Shepherd, who are the sheep? Also, what does He do for them? We will look at Christ as the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd and the Chief Shepherd.

- A. The Good Shepherd. The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself the name, the Good Shepherd.

“I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” John 10:11

A good shepherd has to be ready to give his life for the sheep. Once while David was a shepherd, a bear and a lion attacked the sheep. David risked his life to protect the sheep and killed the savage animals. Our Lord, the Good Shepherd, gave His life for us, the lost sheep.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are One.” John 10:27-30.

Who then are the sheep? Those that hear His voice and follow Him (verse 27). You can hear His voice speaking through the Scriptures. Are you ready to follow Him and make Him your Saviour? If so, you will never perish nor can anyone remove you from the hand of God the Son and the hand of God the Father. You will know that you are one of His sheep, one of His children.

Peter tells us:

1. “Christ suffered for us.” I Peter 2:21

2. “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” I Peter 2:24.
3. “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” I Peter 3:18.

In the first of these verses Peter shows that Christ suffered for us. Because of my sin, I was under the sentence of death. I could not pay or work for my salvation. However, Christ took my place and suffered for me. Now I believe in Him and I do not have to suffer for my sins.

Secondly, Peter declares Christ took our sin to the cross. The words “his own body” is used in several ways in the New Testament. Here it refers to the literal, physical body of our Lord. There is no man or woman, saint or angel, or anyone or anything, that could be a substitute. The Lord Jesus was our Substitute. He is the ONLY Substitute!

Thirdly, Peter reveals the fact that the Lord Jesus died once for our sins. If a sacrifice were imperfect or incomplete, additional sacrifices would be necessary. However, Christ cried out, “It is finished.” God proved that Christ was a perfect sacrifice by raising Him from the dead.

In the Old Testament millions of sacrifices were offered to God. These sacrifices could not make perfect those that were offering them. It was necessary to repeat the sacrifices time after time.

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Hebrews 10:1,2,11,12,14.

The sacrifice of Christ was perfect and complete. It never needs to be repeated. To say that it needs to be repeated, would say that the first sacrifice was not sufficient. “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.” Hebrews 10:17-18.

B. The Great Shepherd.

Again in the letter to the Hebrews we read:

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood

of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Hebrews 13:20-21.

The work of the Great Shepherd is to help the sheep do the will of God. He is ever ready and ever present to help.

C. The Chief Shepherd

Peter heard the Lord call Himself the Good Shepherd. He also knew that Christ was coming back to rule and reign in this world one day. When the Lord returns, He will reward those who have served faithfully. This reward is not eternal life or a place in heaven. Eternal life is a gift from God. Rewards are given only to believers for service or faithfulness. There is a special reward for Pastor-Shepherds that have faithfully cared for the flock. This will be given upon His return. This reward is called “a crown of glory.” There are other crowns and rewards that all believers can receive by being faithful and serving.

II. CHRIST IS OUR BISHOP

Peter called Christ the Shepherd and the Bishop of our souls. He is also the Bishop of the Churches. The word “bishop” means overseer or supervisor. Christ, as our Shepherd and Bishop, keeps, guides and feeds us.

- A. As our Bishop, Christ knows all about our daily life, our business and our family. Peter gives much instruction as to our daily behavior on the job and in the home.
 1. “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.” I Peter 2:11,12.
 2. “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the Word be won by the conversation (life-style) of the wives.” I Peter 3:1
 3. “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them (your wives) according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of God; that your prayers be not hindered.” I Peter 3:7.

Christ knows our thoughts. Peter speaks about meditating on the Word of God. Peter classes the writings of the Apostles as equal in authority to the writings of the prophets of the Old Testament.

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: that ye 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 Saviour.” II Peter 3:1,2

- B. Christ is also the Bishop of each Church. In Revelation chapters 2 and 3 Christ examines His churches. Some were especially commended and received rewards. Some were not living according to the Word of God. He spoke of one church: “So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Revelation 3:16

On the job, in the home, and in the church, everything should be according to the Word of God. This will please Him who gave Himself for us.

WATCH AND PRAY

We have seen that Peter was a great man, an Apostle who was inspired by God. As a man Peter made mistakes but his Epistles were given by God and are without error. The Truth of God never changes. Nothing can be added to or taken from the Word of God. The Holy Bible is a full and complete Revelation of God for today. All men should listen to the Apostle Peter, as well as the other writers of the Bible.

I. THE GLORY THAT FOLLOWS SUFFERING.

Before His death, Christ taught His disciples that it would be necessary for Him to die and that He would be resurrected. The disciples knew that He was the king of Israel and could not understand how He could die. Peter was a spokesman for the other disciples when he rebuked Christ for that teaching. Christ answered Peter:

“Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me.” Matthew 16:23.

Peter just could not understand, that even for Christ, suffering had to come first and then the glory. Peter did understand this after Christ was raised from the dead. We can see in the First Epistle of Peter that he really learned and understood this lesson.

A. The Prophets prophesied the Sufferings and Glory of Christ.

“Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow.” I Peter 1:11.

B. As the Lamb, Christ died, but God; “Raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him Glory.” I Peter 1:21.

C. Christ in “His ownself bare our sins in His own body on the tree,” but now in Glory is “The Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls.” I Peter 2:24.

D. Christ died once and for all for our sins, the Just for the unjust, and now He is:

“Gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.” I Peter 3:22.

This same order of events, first suffering and afterward Glory, applies just as well to us today:

“But rejoice, insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” I Peter 4:13.

Peter calls himself a witness of the Suffering of Christ, and also a partaker of His glory:

“A witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.” I Peter 5:1.

Christ suffered in the world and we suffer also here in the world. The Glory is future for us.

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after, that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” I Peter 5:10.

II. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Peter has taught us that Christ is in Glory at the right hand of His Father. The people of this world rejected the Son of God, insulted Him and crucified Him. God has planned for His Son to be vindicated and glorified here on earth one day. Therefore it is necessary for Christ to come again. The Old Testament Prophets and the New Testament Apostles wrote much about the coming of Christ in Glory. The Lord Jesus Christ also taught about this. Today there are many mockers and scoffers of the Second Coming of our Lord. Peter prophesied of those that would ridicule.

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” II Peter 3:4.

It is true that we do not know when the Lord will come back. But we can be very sure that He is coming. What should we do to be ready for his appearing? Peter tells us:

“Wherefore, beloved seeing that ye look for such things be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” II Peter 3:14.

III. THE GRACE OF GOD.

Peter says we should be found spotless and blameless before God and at peace with ourselves and our fellow man at His coming. Peter also tells us how we can do this. It is not by our good works, regardless of how sincere and important they may appear to be. It is simply by the Grace of God.

Peter testified:

“I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true Grace of God wherein ye stand.” I Peter 5:12.

What is grace? It is the opposite of works. It is something we do not deserve nor can earn or purchase in any manner.

“And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace.” Romans 11:6.

It is not part grace and part works. If one trusts in any manner in works, he does not understand the true Grace of God. Why not renounce all confidence in your own efforts and trust once and for all completely in the finished work of Christ for salvation. Take God at his Word and trust Him completely.

“Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”
John 6:28,29.

We must not only believe in the Grace of God, but we must also grow in the grace of God.

“But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” II Peter 3:18.

At the moment of faith in Jesus Christ one experiences the grace of God. We learn to appreciate the Grace of God more and more as we read the Word of God and pray every day. As we learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ, we grow in grace. The grace of God is truly the most marvelous thing in all the world.

What about those who reject the Grace of God?

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him.” Hebrews 2:3.

There is no hope for those who refuse to accept Christ. One can never be saved on the basis of works, religion or anything else apart from Christ.

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from the dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 9:14.

Why not trust Jesus Christ right now as your only and all-sufficient Lord and Savior?

“For by grace are ye saved through faith.” Ephesians 2:8.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

“Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.” I Peter 4:5.

Saint Peter taught in this verse that God is prepared to judge everyone that is without Christ both the living and the dead. God the Creator of heaven and earth and of all human beings, has given to men a free will but He has the authority and the right to say what I should and should not do. God, in His Word, reveals what is right and correct, and warns of judgment.

The judgment of God operates in four principal areas.

I. THE JUDGMENT OF GOD UPON SIN.

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, their natures became sinful. A sinful nature has been transmitted to the entire human race. Besides this, every single person sins against God by choice, even though they know the result is death.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

Why did God create man knowing that he would sin and be judged? God had already decided to provide a Sacrifice so that men could be saved. God, in the Person of His Son, made a way of escape.

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” I Peter 2:24.

Christ voluntarily accepted the responsibility for our sins which made His death a necessity. After the death of Christ, God raised him from the dead.

“Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” I Peter 1:21.

God also decreed that the Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, would be the Judge of all men.

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.” John 5:22-23.

II. THE JUDGMENT OF THE BELIEVER.

The guilty sinner that comes to Christ for mercy receives immediate pardon of sin. The believer will never be judged for his sins because Christ took all those sins to the cross of Calvary. At the moment of faith in Christ, that person is born again---born into the family of God. Never again does

the believer have to worry about whether his sin has been taken away. The believer does have to be careful about his conduct and behavior. The believer is a child of God and should act like a child of God. If a child of God disobeys the Father, he will be punished in this life. As a child of God, it is a joy to be in the presence of the Father.

If a believer sins, he does not cease to be a child of God, but he does lose his joy and communion with the Lord. It is a loss of joy and a break of fellowship --- not a loss of eternal life.

Peter speaks of the need of the Church to judge itself -- that is to examine itself carefully.

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?” I Peter 4:17.

This is self-judgment that leads to confession of sin. Paul cautioned that this type of judgment or examination is necessary before partaking of the Lord's Supper.

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” I Corinthians 11:28,31-32.

The judgment upon the unbeliever in throughout all of eternity. The chastisement or correction of the Father is upon His children and is to help them to walk and live right in and before the world.

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom He receiveth.” Hebrews 12:6.

All true children of God will experience the disciplining of the Father, if they disobey his Word.

“If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” Hebrews 12:7.

Sometimes, chastening is not easy to endure, but, it is for our good, and a sign of the Love of the Father. Joy and peace follows the correction of the Lord.

“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” Hebrews 12:11.

There are times that we suffer pain or loss because the Lord wants us to separate ourselves from something that He is not pleased with. There can be many reasons for suffering. A child of God will also suffer simply because he belongs to the Lord.

“Remember the Word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.” John 15:20-21.

If we suffer for Christ, it is a reason to rejoice.

“Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.” I Peter 4:16.

III. THE BELIEVER’S REWARDS.

To commit sin is a horrible act against God. If I have trusted Christ truly as my Saviour, all my sins are pardoned and blotted out. If I sin afterward, it saddens the heart of God and He will chasten me for my sin. On the other hand, there is no sin, regardless of how awful it may be, that will take away my eternal life or send me to Hell. Christ fulfilled all and did everything that was necessary on the Cross to take away my sins. Good works did not earn me Salvation, thus my sins cannot nullify or take away what God has already done perfectly and completely. However, do not forget, if we sin as believers or saved people, God will “spank” or discipline us. If I serve God, I will receive reward. These rewards will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” II Corinthians 5:10.

This judgment, mentioned by Paul, has only to do with the rewarding for our service to God -- not our eternal destiny.

“Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” I Corinthians 3:13-15.

What a marvelous truth! I was a wicked, rebellious sinner, but I have been forgiven and washed clean by the precious blood of Christ. God has pardoned me and given me new life and His Spirit so that I might please Him. If I do His will, He has promised me many rewards. Heaven is a free gift, but if I serve God faithfully, I can glorify Him forever. If I die, I will go immediately into the presence of the Lord. The Christian should be able to say with Paul:

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Philippians 1:21.

IV. THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT.

We have seen that all true believers will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ and none of them will ever be condemned as a guilty sinner. All other human beings will appear before the Great White Throne.

“And I saw a Great White Throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”
Revelation 20:11,12.

Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. From this horrible place of punishment there will never be any escape.

“But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whore-mongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8

The Lord Jesus Christ said:

“to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched,”

“the fire is not quenched,”

“into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched,”

“the fire is not quenched.” Mark 9:43-46.

Hell is real and is the destiny of all who have not received the Lord Jesus Christ! When and how can one escape the Lake of Fire?

Waiting until one appears before the Great White Throne Judgment is too late! After death there is no second chance or another opportunity. Truly today is the time. It is not worth it to put off receiving Christ. It is too dangerous to wait for a later date. You have no promise of another day or even of tomorrow. How can one be sure their name is in the Lamb's Book of Life? This Book is in heaven. It is not a list of membership like a Church. One's name is placed in that book at the moment of faith in Jesus Christ.

“But they which are written in the lamb's Book of Life.”

Revelation 21:27b.

The Lamb is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the World.”

John 1:29b.

If you will accept Christ now, He also will accept you.

“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37b.

Right now Christ will give you the gift of eternal life. He will write your name in the Book of Life. Why do you wait or delay? You have everything to lose by putting it off. Place your faith in this very moment in Christ as your only and all-sufficient, personal Lord and Savior.

IMPORTANT VERSES QUOTED BY PETER

Peter Confessed that He was a Sinner. Luke 5:8

Peter Testified that Only Christ Can Save. Acts 4:12

Peter Preached the Necessity of Repentance. Acts 3:19; II Peter 3:9

Peter Confessed Christ to be the Son of God. Matthew 16:16

Peter Exhorted the Unsaved to Believe in Christ. Acts 10:42, 43

Peter Emphasized the Suffering and Work of Christ on the Cross. I Peter 1:23; 2:22-24; 3:18; II Peter 1:4

Peter refused to allow men to bow to him or worship him. Acts 10:25-26

Please answer the following questions with ***True*** or ***False***.

I now realize that I am a sinner. _____

I now understand that only Christ can save. _____

Today, I place my trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour. _____

If already saved, write the date you trusted Christ. _____

Write the reasons now why you hope to go to heaven.

While you are waiting for the return of your exams and the next course, look up all the verses in the Bible under “Biography of Peter” and study them carefully.

Biography of Peter

Peter (a little rock), also called Simon Barjona, and Cephas (the equivalent of “a small rock” in the Syriac language.)

Matthew 16:16-19; Mark 3:16; John 1:42.

“He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:15-18.

There is in the Greek (the original language of the New Testament) a play upon the words, “thou art Peter (*petros* - literally, a little rock), and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church.” The Lord Jesus Christ does not promise to build His church upon Peter, but upon Himself, as Peter himself is careful to say (I Peter 2:4-9).

I. Life of Peter

A. Before his Call

Son of Jona or Jonas. Matthew 16:17; John 21:15

Brother of Andrew. Matthew 4:18

A Fisherman. Matthew 4:18; Luke 5:1-7; John 21:3

A Married Man. Mark 1:30; I Corinthians 9

Not Highly Educated. Acts 4:13

B. From His Call to Pentecost

Brought to Jesus by Andrew. John 1:40-42

Named Cephas (a small rock) by Christ. John 1:42

Called to Follow Christ. Matthew 4:18-22

Confessed Christ’s Deity. Matthew 16:15-18

Rebuked by Jesus. Matthew 16:21-23

Asked Question about Forgiveness. Matthew 18:2

Walked upon the Water. Matthew 14:28-31

Sent with John to Prepare the Passover. Matthew 26:18,19

Misunderstood the Lesson and Refused to allow Christ to Wash his Feet. John 13:6-11

His Denial Foretold by Jesus. Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34.

Peter Professes Faithfulness. Matthew 26:35; Mark 14:31; Luke 22:33

Cuts off the Ear of Malchius. Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:50

Follows Jesus from Afar to High Priest’s Palace. Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54; John 18:15

Denies Christ Three Times. Matthew 26:69-73; Mark 14:66-70;
Luke 22:55-60; John 18:17,18,25-27
Curses and Swears. Matthew 26:74; Mark 14:71
Wept Bitterly. Matthew 26:75
Visits Tomb of Christ. Luke 24:12; John 20:2-6
Returned to Fishing. John 21:1-14
Commissioned to Feed the Flock of Christ. John 21:1-23
Witnessed Christ's Ascension. Matthew 28:16-20
Returns to Jerusalem. Acts 1:12-14
Recommends Filling Vacancy in the Apostleship caused by death of
Judas. Acts 1:15-22

C. His Life from Pentecost Onward

Preached at Pentecost. Acts 2:2-41
Heals Lame Man. Acts 3:1-11
Heals the Sick. Acts 5:15
Imprisoned and Scourged. Acts 5:17-42
Goes to Samaria. Acts 8:14
Rebukes Simon the Sorcerer. Acts 8:18-24
Meets Paul. Acts 9:26; Galatians 1:17,18
Preached the Gospel to the Gentiles. Acts 10:24-46
Explained his Actions to Apostles. Acts 11:1-18
Imprisoned and Delivered by an Angel. Acts 12:3-19
Attends Jerusalem Council. Acts 15:7-14
Rebuked by Paul for Inconsistency. Galatians 2:14
Writes Two Letters. I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:1
Commended Paul's Writings. II Peter 3:15,16

II. His Life Contrasted Before and After Pentecost

Cowardly. Matthew 26:58
Now Courageous. Acts 4:13-20; Acts 5:28,29
Impulsive. Matthew 14:28, 17:4; John 18:10
Now Humble. Acts 3:12-16;
Ignorant. Matthew 16:21,22
Now Enlightened. Acts 4:13
Deeply Inquisitive. John 21:21,22
Now Submissive. Acts 3:12; I Peter 2:13-20
Boastful of Self. Matthew 26:33,34
Now Boastful of Christ. Acts 4:19,20
Timid and Afraid. Matthew 14:28-31
Now Fearless. Acts 5:17-33
Asleep. Matthew 26:40
Now Vigilant. I Peter 5:8; II Peter 3:14-18

Self-Seeking. Matthew 19:27

Self-Sacrificing. Acts 5:40,41

Slow to Comprehend Deeper Truths. Matthew 15:15,16

Gifted with Spiritual Insight. Acts 6:2,5; Acts 8:20-23

III. Lesson on How to Fall, According to Peter

A. There were at least seven steps in his fall. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition... Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I Corinthians 10:11,12.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

Romans 15:4a

1. Conceit. Matthew 26:33

2. Ease. Matthew 26:40

3. Rashness. John 18:10,11

4. Followed Afar Off. Matthew 26:58

5. Evil Associations. John 18:25

6. Open Denial of Christ. John 18:25

7. Blasphemy. Mark 14:70,71

B. The command of the Lord to Peter is also His command to us today, "Follow thou me." John 21:22b. Will you do it?

