

I Peter

INTRODUCTION

Written to Christians who were experiencing persecution of various forms. Men and women who were aliens and strangers in the midst of a pagan society. (Do we identify with the recipients of this letter?) Peter exhorts these Christians to endurance and good behavior. He gives practical instructions and encouragement for believers who live in conflict with their culture.

AUTHORSHIP

Clearly identified as “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.” This would be Simon that Jesus called Cephas (John 1:42). The Greek translation of Cephas is “Petros,” the word in both languages means “stone” or “rock.” Of note is that there is no other person in the New Testament called Peter.

Some scholars have claimed that Peter was an uneducated fisherman and not likely the author of such a beautifully written work of Greek literature, he was only a Galilean fisherman. However, Peter through thought unschooled by Jewish leaders was only thought so because he had no rabbinical training, not because he was illiterate. Peter’s public ministry was over 30 years and took him from Jerusalem to Rome. He lived and taught in a multilingual world and had plenty of time to become an accomplished speaker and literary scholar. The only real questions would be whether Silas, Peter’s secretary may have aided Peter in the writing of the epistles. Peter is clearly the source of the material even if this is so.

DATE

This epistle is written shortly before or just after the beginning of Nero’s persecution of the church in A.D. 64. It is thought just before as it does not appear that specific laws against Christianity had begun. It was still possible for Peter’s readers to “honor the king” (2:17). The persecutions were primarily social and religious rather than legal. The society was hostile and pagan and discriminated against the faithful. Peter also indicates that greater persecution is to come. It is also possible that Nero’s persecutions had begun in Rome and was spreading to the provinces to which Peter was writing, this would date the letter late 64 or early 65. This timing would also explain Peter’s reference to his location as “Babylon” (5:13). Peter was in Rome during the last decade of his life. He was martyred about A.D. 67. Peter was not in custody at the time of the writing and seemed to desire to conceal his true location and therefore used “Babylon” as a pseudonym for Rome. Other scholars say that he was in the literal city of Babylon, where there was a flourishing Jewish community.

PURPOSE

The epistle is a handbook for ambassadors to a hostile foreign land. It describes conduct that would bring honor to the One they represented. The purpose was to encourage Christians to face persecution so that the true grace of Jesus Christ would be seen in them (5:12).

OUTLINE

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COMMENTARY

I. Customary Salutation (1:1–2)

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

- A. **Identification of the author** (1:1a) “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ”
- B. **Identification of those addressed** (1:1b–2) To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

It is clear that this letter was written to people who were Gentiles. They have been released from the futile way of life which they had learned from their ancestors (1:18). Those who were at one time not a people had become nothing less than the people of God (2:10). In previous times, they had followed the ways, the will and the lusts of the Gentiles (4:3). But the outstanding thing about this passage is that it takes words and conceptions which had originally applied only to the Jews, the chosen nation, and applies them to the Gentiles, who had once been believed to be outside the mercy of God. Once, it

had been said that 'God created the Gentiles to be fuel for the fires of hell.' Once, it had been said that, just as the best of the snakes must be crushed, so even the best of the Gentiles must be destroyed. Once, it had been said that God loved only Israel of all nations upon the earth. But now the mercy, the privileges and the grace of God have gone out to all the earth and to all people, even to those who could never have expected them.

The elect, God's chosen people. No longer a title for Israel alone. When Jesus told the parable of the wicked tenants, he said that the inheritance of Israel was to be taken from them and given to others (Matthew 21:41; Mark 12:9; Luke 20:16). That is the basis of the great New Testament idea of the Christian Church as the true Israel, the new Israel, the Israel of God (cf. Galatians 6:16). All the privileges which had once belonged to Israel now belonged to the Christian Church. The mercy of God has gone out to the ends of the earth, and all nations have seen the glory and experienced the grace of God.

The address literally reads: 'To the elect strangers of the Diaspora throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.' *Diaspora*, literally the *dispersion*, was the technical name for the Jews scattered in exile in all the countries outside the bounds of Palestine. Sometimes in their troubled history, the Jews had been forcibly deported from their native land; sometimes they had gone of their own free will to work, and often to prosper, in other lands. Those exiled Jews were called the *Diaspora*. But now the real Diaspora is not the Jewish nation; it is the Christian Church scattered abroad throughout the provinces of the Roman Empire and the nations of the world. Once, the people who had been different from others were the Jews; now the people who are different are the Christians. They are the people whose King is God, whose home is eternity, and who are exiles in the world.

The Christian is *chosen according to the foreknowledge of God*. The Church is not just a human organization—though, of course, it is that. Its origin lies, not in the will of the flesh, in the idealism of men, in human aspirations and plans, but in the eternal purpose of God.' When we are discouraged, we may well remind ourselves that the Christian Church came into being according to the purpose and plan of God—and, if it is true to him, it can never ultimately fail.

The Christian is chosen *to be consecrated by the Spirit*. For Christians, the Holy Spirit is essential to every part of the Christian life and every step in it. It is the Holy Spirit who awakens within us the first faint longings for God and goodness. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of our sin and leads us to the cross where that sin is forgiven. It is the Holy Spirit who enables us to be freed from the sins which have us in their grip and to gain the virtues which are the fruit of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the assurance that our sins are forgiven, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. The beginning, the middle and the end of the Christian life are the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian is chosen *for obedience and for sprinkling by the blood of Jesus Christ*. In the Old Testament, there are three occasions when sprinkling with blood is mentioned.

When a leper had been healed, he was sprinkled with the blood of a bird (Leviticus 14:1–7). Sprinkling with blood is, therefore, the symbol of *cleansing*.

Sprinkling with blood was part of the ritual of the setting apart of Aaron and the priests (Exodus 29:20–1; Leviticus 8:30). It was the sign of *setting apart* for the service of God.

The great picture of the sprinkling comes from the covenant relationship between Israel and God. In the covenant, God, of his own gracious will, approached Israel that they might be his people and that he might be their God. But that relationship depended on the Israelites accepting the conditions of the covenant and obeying the law. Obedience was a necessary condition of the covenant, and failure in obedience meant failure of the covenant relationship between God and Israel. So, the book of the covenant was read to Israel, and the people pledged themselves: 'All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do.' As a token of this relationship of obedience between the people and God, Moses took half the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the altar, and half the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people (Exodus 24:1–8). Sprinkling was for *obedience*.

II. Chosen for New Birth (1:3–2:10)

A. The new birth's living hope (1:3–12)

A Living Hope

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

1. The future inheritance (1:3–5)

2. The present joy (1:6–9)

I Peter 1:3-9 is a single complex sentence in the original language.

The purpose of the passage is to set aside people to be signposts to the new reality or dimension to which Peter is inviting us. By the mercy of God, we have been chosen for a particular purpose. He invites foreigners because we all have dual citizenship. We are simultaneously, inhabitants of this world or country and citizens of God's new world.

(Do you feel you have a particular purpose? What is it?)

Peter also invites us to praise or bless God. We have become a new people and God has become our father. This means that what God did for Jesus at Easter He does for us in the depth of our being. We are a new life. More than that we are being transformed. God has created for us a whole new world. It is out of sight, behind the veil but one day the curtain will be drawn back and the hidden will be merged with earthly reality and transform it.

The suffering that is present means that the quality of the Christian can be seen all the better. This means that when Jesus is revealed there will be an explosion of praise. But while they inhabit the present world, they are to live with a glorified joy welling up within them.

We face difficulty in our world today. Yet if we take on the new identity and know that God keeps us safe then we can feel at home in the present. I see this as experiencing the kingdom of God in this present life.

(Where do you see joy?)

August 26, 2020

3. The past revelation (1:10–12)

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things into which angels long to look!

A vivid image from the past tells of someone watching a blind lamp-lighter lighting the lamps one night at dusk. He tapped his way from lamppost to lamppost bringing to others a light which he himself would never see. As the prophets knew, it is a great gift to receive the vision, even if the fulfilment of the vision is for others still to come.

The message of salvation

John went into a junkshop the other day, in a little town not far from here. He was looking for something in particular, and after wandering around for a while he thought he saw just the thing. It was a bowl, about eight inches across. Someone had obviously used it for flowers at some stage, and it was still dirty with soil and the remains of a few leaves. It looked, too, as though it had a crack running through one side. The owner of the shop had probably not bothered about it, since it was almost entirely covered up with a pile of other old stuff, books, bottles, and goodness knows what else.

John carefully fished the bowl out and, disguising his pleasure, went and bought it at the till. Then, taking it home, he set about cleaning it. He took care. He had spotted (as the shop-owner obviously hadn't) that it was in fact a fine piece of porcelain. He could repair the crack, but equally importantly he could gradually get the dirt and soil out of its pattern and bring it up as good as new. Then, when it was done, he put it in a place of honor, where it was to hold three gorgeous ornamental eggs and show them off to perfect effect. Just what he had wanted.

Now supposing the original owner of the bowl had turned up the next day at the junk shop and had asked for his bowl back, since he wanted to use it again to hold flowers. The shop-owner might direct him to John; but John, perfectly properly, would say that the bowl was no longer available. Not only had he bought it, but he had cleaned it inside and out and given it a whole new use, for which it was really suited. It would be an insult to it, as well as an injustice, to use it simply to hold a few flowers.

B. The new birth's holiness (1:13–2:10)

1. The preparation (1:13–16)

¹³ *Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. ¹⁴ Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. ¹⁵ Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; ¹⁶ for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy." NRSV*

¹³ *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. KJV*

Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind: Living the way God wants us to means that we must gird up the loins of our mind. The idea in this phrase is of preparing for action, much like our phrase "rolling up your sleeves." Then, we must also be sober, which means the ability to take a serious look at life.

To gird up the loins of your mind is to get rid of loose and sloppy thinking; to bring the rational and reflective powers of your mind under control. It means to control what you think about, what you decide that you will set your mind upon.

Be sober: "It denotes a condition free from every form of mental and spiritual loss of self-control; it is an attitude of self-discipline that avoids the extremes." (Hiebert)

Rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ: Peter has told us a lot about God's grace. He greeted us with grace (1 Peter 1:2). He told us of the grace that came to us in Jesus, predicted by the prophets of old (1 Peter 1:10). Now he goes further, writing of the grace that is to be brought to you when Jesus comes back. The only way we will be able to stand before Jesus on that day is because of the *unmerited favor* He gives and will give to us.

Grace isn't just for the past, when we first gave our lives to Jesus.

It isn't only for the present, where we live each moment standing in His grace (Romans 5:2).

It is also for the future, when grace will be brought to us.

God has only just *begun* to show us the riches of His grace.

"*Grace* is the unmerited love of God, stooping to save and bless; the source of all those bright and holy gifts which come from his infinite heart." (Meyer)

As obedient children, *not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance*: Fulfilling God's call to holiness requires that we, as obedient children, break off with the lifestyle of the world (characterized by lusts and ignorance).

But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy": The main idea behind *holiness* is not moral purity but it is the idea of "*apartness*."

The idea is that God is *separate*, different from His creation, both in His essential nature and in the perfection of His attributes. But instead of building a wall around His apartness, God calls us to come to Him and share His apartness. He says to us, "Be holy, for I am holy."

When we fail to see God's apartness, we begin to believe that He is just a "super- man." Then we don't see that His love is a holy love, His justice is a holy justice, and so on with all of His attributes. Holiness is not so much something we possess, as it is something that possesses us.

In this, the God of the Bible is radically different from the pagan gods commonly worshipped in New Testament times. "Heathenism scarcely produced a god whose example was not the most abominable; their greatest gods, especially, were paragons of impurity." (Clarke)

And if you call on the Father: If we, as Christians, call on a holy God (presumably for help), we must understand we call on a God who shows no partiality - and will so judge our conduct, making a working, sober, holy walk all the more important.

2. **The price** (1:17–21)

¹⁷ If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. ¹⁸ You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. ²⁰ He was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. ²¹ Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things: The high call for godly living makes sense in light of the price that was paid for our redemption. We weren't saved by the precious blood of Jesus to then live as if we were garbage.

From your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers: Peter describes a justification by law way of thinking as aimless conduct. It seems to have an aim - gaining merit before God by works - but it is in fact aimless because it cannot succeed.

A lamb without blemish and without spot: Peter here speaks in reference to the completely sinless character of Jesus. If He were not without blemish and without spot, He would not have been qualified to be our Redeemer.

He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world: The work of Jesus was not a plan developed late in the course of redemption. It was foreordained before the foundation of the world, though it was made evident in these last times.

For you who through Him believe in God: The entire plan of redemption is for those who believe in God, though even their belief is through Him. Those who believe in God are not disappointed, because their faith and hope has been substantiated by Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

3. **The purification** (1:22–2:3)

*²² Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. ²³ You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴ For
"All flesh is like grass
and all its glory like the flower of grass.*

*The grass withers,
and the flower falls,
²⁵ but the word of the Lord endures forever.”
That word is the good news that was announced to you.*

² Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander. ² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The result of a new birth should be holy living. Paul says this holy living should be in obedience in the truth that produces a sincere or pure love, repentance from sin and a DESIRE for spiritual growth.

Among the saved there is a necessity for love.

Holy living is not happening if it is not accompanied by love that is sincere and exercised fervently.

*** (Difference in sincere and insincere love?)

It is the supernatural event of being born again that makes it possible for us to obey the truth, to purify ourselves and to love the others. God's Word never perishes.

2:2 There is a desire now for growth. Psalm 42:1 "As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after thee O' God." As a baby requires and desires milk so we should require and desire a deeper spiritual walk and understanding. We should desire the word of God.

If the Word is not desired and supplied there will be no growth and the opposite will actually happen it will lead to death.

God's Word-

Is necessary for growth in the Christian life.

Should lead us to desire more.

"if you have tasted" – If we have had a personal experience of God's grace then we will desire even more enthusiastically more from God.

Peter is urging his people to be done with evil and to set their hearts on that alone which can nourish life. Peter says they must strip off, he actually uses the word for taking off one's clothes. As Christians we must divest of things that are evil and of the world. He gives a list that includes:

- Evil- wickedness in a Christless world. Faults of character which hurt the virtue of Christian mutual love. Love cannot exist with evil.
- Deceitfulness which is trickery. Those who are out to deceive others to their own achievement are deceitful.
- Hypocrisy meaning to be an actor. One who takes the stage and performs as something they are not. Those who profess allegiance to Christianity for their own profit and prestige rather than service and glory of Christ.

- Envy- the last sin to die. We even see it in James and John as they seek the better place in the kingdom. Even at the last supper there was a struggle for the seat of honor. As long as self remains active in our hearts there will be envy.
- Gossiping- disparaging comments and evil speaking. This is often the fruit of envy in the heart and happens when the victim is not available to defend themselves. Don't say anything behind someone's back you would not say to their face.

If we continue to let these things live in us then there will be no church community, no mutual love and the body of Christ will be injured.

September 2,2020

4. The practice (2:4–10)

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

⁷ To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner,"

⁸ and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

In Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:17 Jesus says the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone: this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes." The quotation is from Psalm 118:22 referring to the nation of Israel but Jesus refers to Himself. This follows the parable of the wicked tenants. The parable tells how the tenants killed servant after servant and then even murdered the son. It was showing that the nation of Israel had over and over refused to listen to the prophets and even persecuted them and now refused Jesus the true cornerstone.

This spiritual house shows that as much as Israel had a temple, Christians also have one. But the Christian's temple is spiritual, and they themselves are the temple. Jesus is first called the living stone; then we are called living stones. We live because we are connected with Him who is the source of life. "It is in union with him that they live and answer the end of their regeneration; as stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation." (Clarke)

Chosen by God and precious:

As much as Israel was chosen by God, so is the church. As much as they had a priesthood, so Christians are a **holy priesthood**. And as much as they have sacrifices, so Christians **offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God**.

A holy priesthood: The believer is his own priest before God. He does not need any mediator except his great High Priest, Jesus. "There can no longer be an elite priesthood with claims of special access to God, or special privileges in worship or in fellowship with God." (Grudem)

Peter's idea isn't that God has abandoned Israel or that they have no place in His redemptive plan, but that

Christianity is in no way inferior to Judaism

To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ:

God does the work of building (**being built**), but we do the job of offering sacrifices pleasing to Him, as we come to Jesus as who we are - **living stones**, made by Him.

Even a living stone cannot build something great for God as it sits all on its own. What God does in us *together* is important. He is building something out of us *together*.

We can only serve as priests as we do it **through Jesus Christ**. In ourselves, we have no priestly authority, but only in Jesus.

The purpose for these high privileges is not so we can grow proud, but so that we can proclaim the praises of Him who has done such great things for us. Since it is true that believers have a new life principle (chosen generation), a new access to God (royal priesthood), and a new government (holy nation), and a new owner (His own special people), it will affect the way the believer lives.

That effect is described in the next verses.

II. Challenged to New Behavior (2:11–3:7)

A. New behavior before the world (2:11–25)

1. Christian conduct as witnesses (2:11–12)

¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ¹² Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

The basic understanding of the term *alien* is of one who lives in a foreign country. The term *stranger* implies a temporary sojourner. But Peter has more than just a secular understanding of these two terms. This combination continues Peter's practice of applying to Christians the terms originally applied to Israel in the Old Testament. Abraham is the prime example of an "alien" or "stranger." Peter is not drawing from the secular vocabulary used to indicate classes of residents in lands other than their own.

We can see how some lifestyle choices have repercussions, smoking leads to cancer, too much alcohol can lead to disease but the war that we face and that is important is against the soul. I hesitate to associate disease with God's judgment. It may be due to our poor judgment as a person or as a people over time that leads us to sickness and disease. The battle that is being fought in the heavenlies is the battle for our souls not our bodies.

II Corinthians 4:16 "Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day..."

Christians were falsely accused of great crimes in the early church. Pagans said that at communion Christians ate the flesh and drank the blood of a baby in a cannibalistic ritual. They said that Christian "agape feasts" were wild orgies. They said that Christians were antisocial because they did not participate in society's immoral entertainment. They said that Christians were atheists because

they did not worship idols.

But over time, it was clear that Christians were not immoral people - and it was shown by their lives. "The striking fact of history is that by their lives the Christians actually did defeat the slanders of the heathen. In the early part of the third century Celsus made the most famous and the most systematic attack of all upon the Christians in which he accused them of ignorance and foolishness and superstition and all kinds of things - *but never of immorality.*" (Barclay)

Glorifying God upon the day He comes is probably a reference to their ultimate meeting with God. The idea is that they might be persuaded to become Christians by seeing the lives of other Christians, and that they would glorify God when they meet Him instead of cowering before His holy judgment.

Are our lives leading people toward Christ that they may stand before His judgment?

2. Christian conduct as citizens (2:13–17)

¹³ For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. ¹⁶ As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Peter now looks at the duty of Christians within the different spheres of life. As citizens we should be good citizens and submit to the government. The zealots in that day recognized no king but God and paid taxes to no one but God. Even though Peter realized that Rome was no special friend to Christians he did recognize the authority of the government.

Clarke says that Peter referred to the idea that Jews thought it was unlawful to obey any ruler that was not of their own stock. Peter is saying that they should obey them whether Jew or Gentile. This is an idea that is of concern today as thoughts of a Muslim president or leaders have been a source of outrage by some radical Christian groups. This is not new, nothing is new under the sun, the Zealots in the first century were much the same. Peter is addressing this.

Remember, he says, that though you are indeed God's new **Temple**, you are dispersed among the nations. You must not behave as they do, otherwise your real purpose—to reveal to them who God is and what he's done (2:9)—will be squashed flat before it's even begun. That, of course, is what the surrounding world would prefer: 'Oh, a new religion, is it? I bet you're like all the rest underneath.' But the Christians weren't. One of the reasons the faith spread, despite persecution, is that people gradually saw that this really was a new way of life, a way which nobody had ever imagined could really happen.

Whom to obey: Where civic and Christian good intersect, the Christian is to perform it; where they diverge, the Christian is to follow God's will, not the emperor's decrees. The former will keep the Christian from unnecessary difficulty with civil authorities; the latter virtually guarantees such difficulty.

3. Christian conduct as slaves (2:18–25)

HERE is the passage which would be relevant to by far the greatest number of the readers of this letter, for Peter writes to servants and slaves, and they formed by far the greatest part of the early Church. The word Peter uses for *servants* is not *douloi*, which is the most common word for *slaves*, but *oiketai*, the word for the household and domestic slaves.

There were as many as 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire, mainly prisoners of war in the beginning but by the NT times they were in the millions. They were of all areas of life, doctors, teachers, musicians, actors, steward etc. All work in Rome was done by slaves. There was no point in ruling the world if you had to do your own work. The citizens lived in pampered idleness because the supply of slaves would never run out.

Slaves were not allowed to marry; but they cohabited, and the children born of such a partnership were the property of the master, not of the parents, just as the lambs born to the sheep belonged to the owner of the flock, and not to the sheep.

It would be wrong to think that the situation of slaves was always wretched and unhappy, and that they were always treated with cruelty. Many slaves were loved and trusted members of the family; but one great inescapable fact dominated the whole situation. In Roman law, a slave was not a person but a thing and had absolutely no legal rights whatsoever. For that reason, there could be no such thing as justice where a slave was concerned. Aristotle writes: 'There can be no friendship nor justice towards inanimate things; indeed, not even towards a horse or an ox, nor yet towards a slave as a slave. For master and slave have nothing in common; a slave is a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave.'

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- B. New behavior in the family (3:1–7)
 - 1. Christian conduct as wives (3:1–6)
 - 2. Christian conduct as husbands (3:7)
 - IV. Cautioned for New Persecution (3:8–4:19)
 - A. Overcoming injustice (3:8–22)
 - 1. A compassionate conduct (3:8–12)
 - 2. A clear conscience (3:13–22)
 - B. Enduring suffering (chap. 4)
 - 1. Christlike attitude (4:1–6)
 - 2. Christlike service (4:7–11)
 - 3. Christlike faith (4:12–19)
 - V. Charged with New Responsibility (5:1–11)
 - A. Elders are to shepherd (5:1–4)
 - B. Young men are to submit (5:5–7)
 - C. All are to stand firm (5:8–11)
 - VI. Conclusion (5:12–14)