

The General Epistles

Winford Claiborne

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In honor of

James and Beulah Hodges

And in honor of

Hatler and Virginia Morgan

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Dedication

To:

Wayne and Betty Jackson

Dedicated Christian Couple
Wonderful Parents and Grandparents
Diligent Workers in the Lord's Church
Great Example for All Preacher's families
Dear friends

Wayne and Betty: Thanks for your encouragement and
God bless you.



Preface

Everyone who hears Winford Claiborne speaking on the International Gospel Hour radio program is immediately impressed with one thing. Here is a man who has “done his homework.” Numerous listeners of the Gospel Hour programs speak highly of his resourcefulness and scholarly approach to every subject about which he speaks.

In addition to staying abreast of cultural trends—I know of no one who reads more books than he does—Winford Claiborne is a dedicated student of God’s Word. Thus, when he speaks, whether orally or in print, he will know his subject well. And, with a fine command of the English language, he knows how to communicate effectively. Not everyone who hears him will agree with him, but all who listen will know what the truth is, and that he will not compromise the truth.

The seven divinely inspired books of the New Testament found between the Epistle to the Hebrews and the book of Revelation are usually categorized as generic or general epistles.

This designation does not occur in the body of the epistles, but only in the titles of the books, which man has designated for them. The term generic is given to these seven letters because they were not addressed to particular churches or individuals, but to Christians at large. For example, the first epistle of Peter is addressed to the saints scattered abroad (1 Peter 1:1).

Each of the general epistles is replete with practical lessons for the Christian, with instruction and guidelines on a wide variety of topics. Winford Claiborne gives due attention to each of these topics and helps the reader to understand the text and make proper application of the lesson therein.

Consider what the reader will find in this volume, as the author addresses each epistle -

1. There is no book in the Bible that is more practical than the epistle of James. In this short book, there is the opportunity to study the importance of: (a) being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only, (b) practicing pure religion,

(c) controlling the tongue, (d) expressing one's faith in works of righteousness, (e) the sin of partiality, and (f) how brethren in Christ should treat one another.

2. In the two epistles of Peter, (a) the Christian is admonished to hold on, keep the faith, and don't turn back when trials come. (b) Peter also makes the Christian aware of the presence of false teachers. (c) There is encouragement for the Christian who is faced with trials and discouragement. (d) The word of God is glorified and emphasized as the means by which we are saved, and by which we grow spiritually. (e) Jesus is exalted as the supreme example of how to endure mistreatment and injustice, and Peter instructs the Christian how to respond when he suffers as a Christian. (f) Peter understood the duties of an elder of the church, and gave extremely timely directions to his fellow-elders. And, (g) the last chapter of 2 Peter admonishes the Christian how to live, in view of the coming of the Lord and the destruction of the earth.

3. The beloved John's three epistles comprise some of the most reassuring, spiritually uplifting scriptures in the Bible. In his first general epistle, for example, there are more than two dozen texts that give the faithful Christian an assurance of his salvation. Also, John used the word "love" more than four dozen times to help the disciples understand how to reciprocate the love of God, and the attending duties of their love for each other.

4. As Jude began his letter to Christians, he said he intended to write about their common salvation, but was constrained to urge them to "contend earnestly for the faith." This one-chapter treatise to Christians contains important truths that all Christians would be wise to consider, including divinely chosen illustrations of the certainty of the judgment of God upon all the ungodly.

Every sincere Christian who reads these epistles will grow spiritually, and the book you now hold in your hands is designed to help you study, understand, and appreciate the rich texts of these seven books. Your study of the general epistles, with the aid of this book, will increase your ability to live the Christian life faithfully and joyfully in the days you remain on this earth.

~ David Sain

Introduction

Some of the leaders in the so-called "Emerging Church Movement" accuse members of various churches of stressing doctrinal purity but neglecting to emphasize Christian living. That may be true in some cases, but I seriously doubt it is the general practice of most religious groups. Many preachers are fond of saying: "Christians must not only talk the talk; we must also walk the walk." Throughout the New Testament, Christians are urged to believe and to teach the truth of God's holy word. If we fail to believe and to teach the truth, we shall stand under the just judgment of God Almighty. But if we do not practice the truth, our religion is vain (James 1:22-27). We shall ultimately be condemned for our hypocrisy.

The seven epistles that constitute this study outline the many obligations Christians must honor. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only (James 1). We must not discriminate on the basis of socio-economic differences (James 2). The Holy Spirit demands that we control our tongues and seek the wisdom that comes from above (James 3). We must remember that Christians are separate from the world and must plan our lives with God's will in mind (James 4). God condemns the rich who take advantage of the poor and urges all Christians to be patient in waiting for the Lord's coming (James 5). The great principles James stresses are firmly rooted in the existence of God and in the revelation of His will. How can anyone claim to believe in God and in His inspired word and not observe the great truths in this great epistle?

The apostle Peter reminds us of the inheritance-incorruptible, undefiled and unfading-God has reserved for those who believe in God and have obeyed the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of our brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Peter 1). As God's chosen generation,

royal priesthood, holy nation and people for God's own possession, we must honor the government under which we live and remember that our Lord suffered and died for us (1 Peter 2). Christian husbands and wives must follow God's instructions. Christians must be ready to give reasons for our faith in God, in His Son and in His word (1 Peter 3). Peter tells us that Christians can expect persecution, but if we suffer for the cause of Christ, we shall be blessed (1 Peter 4). Fortunately, God arranges for elders to lead His people. Peter commands Christians to be humble, to cast our cares on the Lord and to resist Satan's attempts to lead us into soul-condemning error (1 Peter 5).

In his second epistle the Apostle Peter urges all who have obeyed the gospel to add to our faith the Christian graces—virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Failure to add these attributes means we will be barren and unfruitful. Peter provides insight into how God has revealed Himself to man (2 Peter 1). By divine inspiration, Peter knew false teachers would arise. He gives us help in recognizing those teachers. He warns us not to follow those teachers and become unfaithful (2 Peter 2). The apostle warns against listening to men who deny the Lord's second coming. He urges all Christians to be ready for the Lord's return. He concludes this short but powerful epistle by commanding us to grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3).

The Apostle John provides wonderful insight into who Jesus is. He tells us that we are all sinners, but assures Christians of forgiveness if they continually walk in the light (1 John 1). John teaches that Christ is our advocate with the Father and the propitiation for our sins. He emphasizes our ability to know God, our responsibility to love our brothers, the need to avoid worldly behavior and how to recognize antichrists (1 John 2). The apostle tells us of God's love for fallen men, what sin is, how to

distinguish between children of God and children of the devil and God's message of love (1 John 3). John gives us information that allows us to discern the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. He also strongly stresses brotherly love among Christians (1 John 4). John demands faith in Christ Jesus and love for brothers and sisters in Christ. He concludes his book with the confidence we can have in the Lord (1 John 5).

John's second epistle admonishes Christians to walk in the Lord's commandments (v. 5). He warns Christians about the possibility of being deceived, about transgressing the law of God and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. We are not to fellowship those who teach false doctrine; nor are we to bid them God speed (vs. 9-11). This small epistle deserves serious consideration because of the error that is being promoted in the religious world.

3 John describes three men: Gaius, Diotrefes and Demetrius. John prayed that Gaius, a devout Christian and generous, would enjoy prosperity (vs. 1-8). Does that necessarily mean financial prosperity? Diotrefes was the typical church dictator. If the members did not bow to his views, he did not receive them (vs. 9-11). Demetrius had a good report of all men and even of the truth itself (v. 12). The brief biographical study of these three men should be very instructive for all Christians, including leaders among God's people.

The book of Jude has many resemblances of 2 Peter. Both books express the Lord's concern about false teachers. Jude, our Lord's half brother, encouraged his readers to contend earnestly for the faith (v. 3). He knew that certain men had crept into the church who were striving to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (v. 4). He provides some examples of God's judgment against the ungodly (vs. 5-7). Jude called some of the troublemakers "filthy dreamers" who speak evil of the things they did not know (vs. 8-10). He pronounced woes on the evildoers (vs. 11-

13). He mentions some of the warnings the apostles had given (vs. 17-19). He concludes his book with exhortation to faithfulness and a benediction (vs. 20-25). Many modern theologians think Jude's short epistle is too negative, but its message is badly needed in this postmodern age.

The seven epistles in this study strongly emphasize our duty to live everyday for Jesus Christ. If we want to be saved and to influence others to live for Jesus, we must learn and live the principles these inspired epistles teach. Is that not what our Lord meant when He encouraged His followers to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16)?

It was my privilege and honor to teach these seven "general epistles" for fourteen years at Freed-Hardeman University, in Henderson, Tennessee. I suspect that I learned more by teaching these books, than the young people in my classes. But those students were a great inspiration to me. They challenged me to do my very best every day. I am grateful to the administration of Freed-Hardeman University for giving me so many opportunities and to the thousands of students I have had in my various classes.

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James

Introduction To

The Epistle Of James

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. James has been called the “wisdom literature of the New Testament” (D. Edmond Hiebert, **An Introduction to the New Testament: The Non-Pauline Epistles**. Chicago: Moody Press, 1977, p. 32).
 - 1. “Wisdom literature” is a technical term referring to writings which have:
 - a. Short, pithy sayings, such as, proverbs.
 - b. It also has much to say about wisdom.
 - c. The wisdom literature of the Old Testament is: Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and portions of other books, such as, Psalms.
 - d. Outside the Old Testament: The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus..
 - 2. James has short, powerful proverbs:
 - a. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:8).
 - b. “Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4:17).
 - 3. James also discusses wisdom at some length (Jas. 1:5-6; 3:13-18).
- B. James resembles the great prophets of the Old Testament. He has been styled “the Amos of the New Testament” (Hiebert, p. 32).
 - 1. Amos was a prophet of uncompromising devotion to the people of God.
 - a. The people of Judah “have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked” (Amos 2:4).

- b. "Behold, the days come, says the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor of thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11).
 2. "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jas. 4:8-10).
- C. The canonicity of James.
 1. The word "canon" from the Greek *kanon* and literally means a measuring device. It came to mean that which is measured. Books of the New Testament canon had to meet certain standards before they were accepted into the canon.
 - a. Apostolic writers or their associates.
 - b. The books have to come from the first century.
 - c. They could not teach any "peculiar" doctrine, that is, any doctrine which Christ and his apostles had not taught.
 2. There were some difficulties associated with admitting James to the canon.
 - a. Early attestation was very weak. There may not have been any writers until the last of the second century who used the book of James.
 - b. There may be echoes of James in the early writings, but we cannot be certain.
 - c. The **Shepherd of Hermas** (c. 110-140) may have referred to James.
 - d. Neither the **Muratorian Canon** (c. 200 A.D.), nor Tertullian (c. 150-220), nor the **African Canon** (3rd century) included James.

- e. Eusebius, one of the early church historians (265-340), placed James in the antilegomena (disputed books).
3. External evidence.
- a. Origen (3rd century) was the first to mention James.
 - b. Theodore of Mopseustia (350-428) has the quotation from James concerning Job (Jas. 5:11).
 - c. Jerome (348-420) includes James in the canon.
 - (A) Jerome had a profound influence on the acceptance of James into the canon.
 - (B) He taught that James was the brother of Jesus.
 - d. Augustine (354-430) — one of the most influential “church fathers” — accepted James.
 - e. The Second Council of Carthage recognized James.
 - f. Period of the Reformation.
 - (A) Luther questioned whether or not the book should have been included in the canon.
 - (1) He would not classify James among “capiatal” books. He placed it at the end of the canon, like an appendix.
 - (2) He called James “a right strawy epistle.” There is some evidence he changed his mind before he died.
 - (3) He classified James as a secondary epistle because it did not manifest Christ.
 - (B) Erasmus questioned its canonicity.
 - (C) Cajetan (1469-1534) also questioned it.
4. Internal evidence.
- a. “The contents of the epislte, with its lack of emphasis on doctrinal teaching, offer no

- motive to suspect forgery" (Hiebert, p. 34).
- b. Luther's evaluation of James (which has not generally been followed by the Lutheran Church) simply cannot be justified. There is no conflict between Paul's and James' teachings on faith and works.

D. Authorship of James.

1. The author of James refers to himself as a teacher. "My brethren, be not many masters (*didaskaloi*: teachers), know **we** shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1).
2. He also called himself a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Jas. 1:1).
 - a. "Servant" from *doulos* (slave or bondsman) and means "one who gives himself up to the will of another."
 - b. Paul often uses the same word of himself (Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:1).
3. There are four men named James in the New Testament:
 - a. James the son of Zebedee (Mt. 4:21).
 - b. James the son of Alphaeus (Mk. 10:3)).
 - c. The father of Judas.
 - d. James the brother of the Lord (Mt. 13:55; Gal. 1:19; Mk. 6:3).
4. Which of these men was more likely to have written the book of James?
 - a. James the son of Zebedee (brother of John, the beloved apostle) was killed by Herod (Acts 12:2).
 - (A) The theory that this James wrote the book has very few supporters.
 - (B) He was killed by Herod Agrippa I not later than the spring of 44. It was very unlikely that the book was written early than that.
 - (C) James the son of Zebedee had not at-

tained any prominence among Jewish Christians, so far as we know.

- b. James the son of Alphaeus (Mk. 10:3).
 - (A) Origen thought this man wrote the book of James, but he had no evidence to sustain his opinion.
 - (B) This view has never been widely held among Bible believers.
- c. James the father of Judas is otherwise unknown. It is unlikely that a man who is so obscure would not further identify himself (Jas. 1:1).
- d. James the Lord's brother (Mt. 13:55; Gal. 1:19; Mk. 6:3).
 - (A) Personal history of James.
 - (1) Before the resurrection of Christ, his brothers did not believe in him (John 7:5).
 - (2) Jesus appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:7).
 - (3) Paul went up to Jerusalem and saw Peter. "But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:18-19).
 - (4) After Peter was released from prison, he told the people at Rhoda's house, "Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren" (Acts 12:17).
 - (5) James was the spokesman for the elders and apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 15:12ff.).
 - (6) Paul spoke of "certain men who came from James" (Gal. 2:2). Lenski, Hendriksen, et al, think they were not sent by James.
 - (B) Traditions concerning James.
 - (1) Josephus says that James was stoned to death by Annas the high priest.

This tradition is thought by many scholars to be authentic.

- (2) Eusebius—a well known church historian—says that James was thrown off the temple.
- (3) Eusebius collected stories by Hegesippus who “says that James lived the life of a Nazarite and spent so much time in prayer on his knees in the temple that his knees became hard as a camel’s knees” (Hiebert, p. 46). He was known as the “camel-knee.”

5. Arguments for traditional authorship.

- a. There are remarkable similarities between the epistle of James and the letter the Jerusalem church sent to the Gentiles (Acts 15). This argument is not absolutely conclusive.
 - (A) The same form of “greeting” is used in both letters (Jas. 1:1; Acts 15:23).
 - (1) The Greek infinitive *chairein* (from *chairo*).
 - (2) This was a common greeting in secular letters (Lenski, p. 522).
 - (3) “It is the usual idiom in the thousands of papyri known to us, but in no other New Testament letter” (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1933, volume 6, p. 11).
 - (B) “Hearken, my beloved brethren” (Jas. 2:5; Acts 15:13).
 - (C) “Your souls” (*psuchas humon*) used in both contexts (Jas. 1:21; Acts 15:24).
 - (D) The unusual word “visit” (*episkeptomai*), “common verb to go see, to inspect, present tense for the habit of going to see” (Robertson, volume 6, p. 25), is used

- in both letters (Jas. 1:27; Acts 15:14). This does not constitute what philosophers call a “knock-down argument.”
- b. Many resemblances in the sayings of this epistle to the teachings of Jesus, especially in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount.
 - (A) “The epistle contains more verbal reminiscences of the teachings of Jesus than all the other apostolic writings taken together. Specially noteworthy are its undoubted echoes of the Sermon on the Mount (Ross. **Commentary on James**, p. 16)).
 - (B) There does not appear to have been a deliberate quoting of the Synoptics, but rather a manifestation of a long association with Jesus.
 - c. “The epistle is the work of just the type of mind which all the mentions of James in the New Testament and Christian tradition reveal him to be” (Hiebert, p. 42).
5. Objections to the traditional view of authorship.
- a. How can we explain the apparent lack of familiarity with this epistle in the first century if it were written by James, the Lord’s brother?
 - (A) There is a complete absence of any family relationship. No personal reference of any kind. Could that be humility on the part of James?
 - (B) There really is not reasonable solution to this problem.
 - b. How does one explain the excellent Greek from a Galilean?
 - (A) The Greek of James is excellent. There is Greek alliteration, varied vocabulary. This man thinks in Greek.

- (B) Critics are actually operating on silence. We do not know how much any of the Bible writers really knew.
 - (C) That part of Palestine was bilingual. He would have been writing as one who grew up using the Greek language.
 - c. According to critics, the references to persecution in James would require a later date. Answer: This was not governmental persecution, but oppression from the rich, the socially elite, etc.
 - d. The major question about which James was concerned in an earlier conflict (Acts 15), that is, keeping the law of Moses, is not mentioned in the book of James. This is not a valid objection at all. Conditions change and people change. There could be many reasons why James does not discuss Judaism.
- E. The date of the book.
1. Dates range all the way from 44 A.D. to 65 A.D. There really is no way of being exact in dating James. It really depends on who the author was.
 2. Conservative scholarship tends to date it early; liberal critics generally date it late.
 3. One notable exception to the liberal critics is Bishop John A. T. Robinson of the Church of England. He leans towards dating James as early as 47 or 48 (**Redating the New Testament**, p. 138). Robinson dates every New Testament book before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 4. Hiebert dates James in 46, or at least, before 49 (p. 53). If Hiebert is correct, that would make James the earliest of the New Testament books.
 5. Jack Lewis suggests 62 or 63, if the author of James was the Lord's brother.
 6. Some argue that James reflects some of Paul's

writings, which would place it later than Robinson suggested. Some have even claimed that James was written in opposition to Paul's teaching on faith and works.

F. Style of the epistle.

1. Jack Lewis: Greek-type preface; sermonic form; imperative mood. There are 54 imperatives in James.
2. "The language is clear, uninvolved, and straight to the point" (Hiebert, p. 54). Contrast James with the book of Romans.
3. What is the literary type? (The Bible has almost every conceivable literary type: sermon, story, parable, fable, etc.).
 - a. J. H. Ropes compared James to Stoic diatribes. This would involve an imaginary audience. James is not a diatribe, but a group of maxims with no particular order; one thought leads to another (Jack Lewis).
 - b. James uses rhetorical questions, popular type illustrations: rudder to guide ships, bridle to turn horses, the waves of the sea, etc.
4. There are some notable omissions in James — omissions which probably led Martin Luther to reject James as a capital book: incarnation, atonement, future life, etc. He does refer to Jesus as "the Lord of glory" (Jas. 2:1).

F. Contents of James.

1. Great emphasis on faith and works (Jas. 2).
2. Very strong Jewish coloring (Hiebert, p. 56).
 - a. Hayes calls it the most Jewish writing in the New Testament (Hiebert, p. 56).
 - b. The opening address is Jewish: "To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (Jas. 1:1).

- c. James mentions Abraham (2:21), Rahab (2:25), Job (5:11), and Elijah (5:17-18).
 - d. James is the only New Testament writer who refers to God as the "Lord of Sabaoth" (5:4). "Sabaoth" means "hosts."
3. Extensive use of illustrations drawn from nature.
- a. "He that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (1:6).
 - b. "As the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (1:10).
 - c. "The sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes" (1:11).
 - d. "It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away" (4:14).
4. There are a great many similarities between James and the Sermon on the Mount. A partial listing:

a. JAMES	MATTHEW
1:2	5:10-12
1:4	5:48
1:5; 5:15	7:7-12
1:9	5:3
1:20	5:22
2:13	5:7; 6:14-15
2:14-16	7:21-23
3:17-18	5:9
4:4	6:24
4:10	5:3-4
4:11	7:1-2
5:2	6:19
5:10	5:12
5:12	5:33-37

- b. Robert Scott argues that "there is scarcely a thought in the Epistle which cannot be traced to Christ's personal teaching. If John has lain on the Savior's bosom, James has sat at his feet" (Hiebert, p. 57).
 - c. There are at least twenty-six echoes from the synoptics: Love your neighbor (3:12), fruit (4:10) and humble (5:10).
5. Addresses.
- a. "Twelve tribes of the Dispersion." What does this expression mean? Possibilities:
 - (A) Literal Jewish people: those who were spread abroad throughout the Roman Empire.
 - (B) Ideally, we can speak of Israel as "the twelve tribes."
 - (C) Incidentally, American Indians, according to Mormon historians, are supposed to be the lost tribes of Israel.
 - (D) Armstrong position: Covenant in Hebrew is *berit* and *ish* means man. British: Anglo-Israelism.
 - b. "Dispersion" from *diaspora* referred to those Jews outside Palestine.
 - (A) They originally left and spread throughout the world for commercial reasons.
 - (B) By New Testament times three-fourths of the Jews lived outside Palestine.
 - c. How do we understand the address of James?
 - (A) The church had become the true Israel of God (Gal. 6:16).
 - (B) The church did not think of having departed from God. God had simply

written another chapter in his dealings with men.

- (C) The word "dispersion" shows that this world is not the home of God's people.
 - (D) Is the term to be taken literally or figuratively?
 - (1) There is no discussion of Jewish institutions or practices, although Old Testament characters are mentioned.
 - (2) Dr. Jack Lewis thinks the audience was almost certainly Greek.
6. Major questions in the book of James.
- a. Faith and works (Jas. 2).
 - (A) Faith has no value without works.
 - (B) We must show our faith by our works.
 - (C) Devils (demons) believe and tremble.
 - (D) Abraham was justified by works.
 - (E) Rahab showed her faith by her works.
 - (F) As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
 - (G) Paul in Romans and in Galatians uses Abraham as an illustration of faith.
 - (1) Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.
 - (2) Martin Luther had difficulty seeing the harmony of this passage with his doctrine of faith only (*sola fide*).
 - (H) There is no conflict between Paul and James. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love" (Gal. 5:6).

- b. James deals with many very vital topics.
 - (A) Trials: testing of man. Resist temptation and a man becomes stronger.
 - (1) We are drawn by "desires" (*epithumia*).
 - (2) We must receive the word properly. Some look at the word but do not observe what it teaches.
 - (B) Pure and undefiled religion (Jas. 1:26-27).
 - (C) James warns against partiality (Jas. 2).
 - (D) Watch the tongue.
 - (1) Do not decide not to teach; work harder at being the right kind of teacher.
 - (2) Be careful about teaching. It is a grave responsibility.
 - (3) Illustrations: horse-bits, ship-helm.
 - (4) Great forests can be burned with a small match. The tongue is a fire. When to make statements and how to make them are very important.

Living For Jesus:

Questions For Introduction To James

- 1 Why would James be called "wisdom literature?"
- 2 Some scholars think James resembles the great prophets of the Old Testament. What would lead to think that?
- 3 The New Testament mentions four men by the name of James. Which one of those men is the most likely author of the epistle of James?
- 4 Depending on which James wrote the epistles, James may be the oldest book in the New Testament. Discuss.
- 5 What names from the Old Testament appear in James?
- 6 James seems to consciously quote from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount. Give some examples.
- 7 List some of the major topics from this great epistle.

Chapter 1

The Epistle Of James

I. An exegesis of the book of James.

CHAPTER 1

A. The greeting (1:1). "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting" (1:1).

1. "James" from *Iakobos*, the equivalent of the Old Testament "Jacob."

a. Was he really the brother of Jesus? There were three theories about his being the brother of Christ.

(A) Helvidian. Helvidius (4th century) believed that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. Afterward she married Joseph and they had sons and daughters.

(1) The children of Joseph were called "sons" (*huios*) not "cousins" (*anepsios*).

(2) Jesus is called Mary's "firstborn" (Lk. 2:7).

(3) Tertullian (150-222) believed that the sons of Mary and Joseph were the uterine brothers of Jesus.

(4) Objections to this teaching was prompted by the desire of Roman Catholic theologians to maintain the perpetual virginity of Mary (Hiebert, p. 47).

(B) Epiphonian theory. Epiphanius (c. 315-403) was bishop of Salamis. He argued that the brothers of Jesus were sons of

Joseph by another marriage; hence they were older than Jesus.

(1) Origen (185-253), Eusebius (265-340) and Gregory of Nyssa (332-398) held this view.

(2) Jerome called it "apocryphal nonsense."

(3) This theory was intended to safeguard the virginity of Mary.

(C) Hieronymian theory. This theory was named after Jerome, a brilliant scholar. He was the translator of the Latin Vulgate.

(1) Jerome maintained that the Lord's brothers and sisters were really his cousins.

(2) If that were true, why did not the inspired writers use the word for cousins (*anepsios*) instead of the word for sons (*huios*)?

b. There is no scriptural evidence that we accept any other conclusion than that Jesus had brothers.

2. "A servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

a. "Servant" from *doulos*, slave or bondservant, one who gives himself wholly to the will of another."

b. Paul often referred to himself as a *doulos* (Rom. 1:1; Tit. 1:1). Paul also called Christians "servants" (Rom. 6:16; 1 Cor. 7:21-23).

c. Why did James not give more information about himself? If he really were the Lord's brother, why did not he not say so?

(A) It could have been that he was so well known that he did not need further identification.

- (B) Maybe he did not want to boast of his relationship to Christ. We really do not know.
3. "To the twelve tribes scattered abroad."
 - a. Are these Jewish Christians scattered throughout the world?
 - b. Guy N. Woods thinks the term "twelve tribes" is a figurative expression and embraces "the disciples of the Lord of whatever race or nationality" (James. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, p. 31).
 - (A) The church of our Lord is the true Israel and Christians are the true Jews (Rom. 2:28-29; Gal. 6:16).
 - (B) Being a descendant of Abraham does not make one a child of God.
 4. "Greeting."
 - a. *Chairein* is derived from *chairo*, to rejoice.
 - b. The same word is used in Acts 15:23 in the letter James composed and sent to the Gentile churches.
- B. Trials and temptations (1:2-18).
1. How Christians should think of trials (1:2-4).
 - a. "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations" (1:2).
 - (A) "My brethren" from *adelphoi mou*, a term of endearment.
 - (1) James uses this phrase 19 times in his epistle.
 - (2) It indicates his identification with those to whom he writes.
 - (B) "Count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations."
 - (1) "Count" from *hegeomai*, to consider, to think.
 - (2) "All joy" from *pasan charan*. How can

Christians count it all joy when trials and temptations come?

- (3) "Fall" from *periptpto*, "fell among the thieves" (Lk. 10:30).
 - (4) "Divers temptations" from *peirasmois poikilois*.
 - (a) "Temptation" (*peirasmois*) can mean either outward trial or inward temptation. In this context it means "outward trial."
 - (b) "Divers" from *poikilois* and means manifold, of many different kinds. "You are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1 Pet. 1:6).
- b. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience" (1:3).
- (A) "Knowing this." This explains the "joy" above.
- (1) *Ginoskontes* from *ginosko* and shows that men can have assurance of their Christian profession. They can be certain of what they believe (Heb. 11:1).
 - (2) How do we come to **know** that "our faith works patience?"
- (B) "Trying" from *dokimion (dokimazo)* and means proving, approving, testing, examining. It involves proving with a view either to approving or to disapproving.
- (1) "That you may **prove** what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).
 - (2) "The fire **shall try** every man's work of what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13).
 - (3) "They **did not like** to retain God in

their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28). They examined God and did not like what they found.

- (C) Faith has to be tested. How can we know if we will stand fast when we have never been tested?
- (D) "Works" from *katergazetai* and literally means "to work out, to bring about." The same verb is used in Philippians 2:12 and is translated "work out."
- (E) "Patience" from *hupomone*, abiding under.
 - (1) "Endurance" (Williams), "perseverance" (NIV), and "stedfastness" (RSV). James 5:11 refers to the endurance or stedfastness of Job. He certainly was not patient in the way we commonly use that word.
 - (2) *Makrothumei* (also translated "patience") refers to one, who "having power to avenge himself, yet refrains from the exercise of this power" (R.C. Trench. **Synonyms of the New Testament**. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 195).
 - (3) The one to receive the benefit of the trials is the one who goes through them and endures.
- c. "But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:4).
 - (A) "Patience" from *humpmone*, endurance, "stickability," as N. B. Hardeman used to say.

- (B) "Perfect" from *teleios*, meaning achieving the goal (*telos*), completeness, maturity.
- (1) The word never means sinlessness, even when it is used in reference to God.
 - (2) The idea of going on to perfection or maturity is a major theme in the Bible (Heb. 6:1).
 - (3) Christ was "made perfect" (*teleios*) through sufferings (Heb. 2:10). This passage cannot mean that Christ became sinless through sufferings; he was already sinless. Cf. Phil. 3:12-14).
- (C) "That you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."
- (1) In order that you may be perfect and entire.
 - (2) "Entire" from *holokleros*, *holos*, whole and *kleros*, a lot or an allotment.
 - (a) Having the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-11) and producing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23).
 - (b) The word may have its roots in the Old Testament idea of an animal that was sound and acceptable unto God for sacrifice.
 - (3) "Wanting" from *leipomenoi* (*leipo*: to leave) and means lacking. If we follow Christ, he supplies our every need.
2. The source and need of wisdom (1:5-8).
- a. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally,

and upbraids not; and it shall be given him" (1:5).

(A) "If any of you lack wisdom."

(1) This verse is connected with verse 4. Christians should be lacking in nothing. However, "if any of you lack wisdom," God is the source of all wisdom.

(2) "Wisdom" from *sophias* and indicates the application of knowledge and understanding to one's life.

(a) James is not talking about about worldly wisdom. We shall have more to say about "wisdom from above" and "wisdom not from above" (Jas. 3:13-18).

(b) Paul speaks of the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men (1 Cor. 1:18ff.).

(c) Paul warns about "philosophy" (Col. 2:8). "Philosophy" comes from two Greek words: *Philos*, love, and *sophias*, wisdom, literally "love of wisdom." What could be wrong with loving wisdom?

(B) "Let him ask of God."

(1) Is James arguing that all one needs to do to be wise is just ask God?

(2) What part does the study of God's word have to do with our becoming wise?

(3) How much does one's attitude have to do with gaining wisdom?

(C) "That gives to all men liberally and upbraids not."

- (1) God wants men to be wise and has provided the means whereby they can achieve that goal.
 - (2) Notice that God is here called a giving God.
 - (a) God so loved that he gave (John 3:16).
 - (b) 2 Cor. 8:9.
 - (3) "Liberally" from *haplos* and is used only here in New Testament. The word means simplicity, freely, purely.
 - (4) "Upbraids" from *oneidizontos*, "to cast into the teeth" (Mt. 27:44), to reproach (Lk. 6:22), to revile (Mt. 5:11).
 - (a) "Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most repented not" (Mt. 11:20).
 - (b) "If you be reproached for thee name of Christ, happy are you; for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: on your part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified" (1 Pet. 4:14).
 - (c) The idea is that God gives with nothing held back, without reservation.
- (D) "And it shall be given him."
- (1) Could James be reflecting our Lord's words: "Ask, and it shall be given him" (Mt. 7:7)?
 - (2) When our prayers are offered in harmony with God's will, they will never fail of fulfillment.
- b. "But let him ask in faith, nothing waver-

ing. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (1:6).

(A) "But let him ask in faith."

(1) If God knows that we need wisdom and other blessings—both material and spiritual—(Mt. 6:32), why do we have to ask?

(2) "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever you desire, when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall receive them" (Mk. 11:24).

(B) "Nothing wavering."

(1) "Wavering" from *diakrino* and suggests an inner conflict, debating with oneself. Thayer: "To be at variance with oneself."

(2) "Doubting" (ASV). This shows a lack of faith.

(C) "He that wavers is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

(1) This is a very vivid picture of what doubt and uncertainty can mean in the life of a Christian.

(2) "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12).

(3) Contrast the one who is "driven by the wind and tossed" with the one who is constant, steadfast, strong. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might" (Eph. 6:10).

c. "For let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord" (1:7).

- (A) God's special blessings are simply not available to the one who is not stable—who does not believe in the goodness of the Lord and who does not ask in faith.
- (B) James obviously is not discussing material blessings: sun, rain, etc. "That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt. 5:45).
- d. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (1:8).
 - (A) "Double-minded" from *dipsuchos*, a two-souled man.
 - (1) This is the man who "is like the wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."
 - (2) The word indicates uncertainty, instability, "a man of two minds." This same word is used in James 4:8 and nowhere else in the New Testament.
 - (B) "Unstable in all his ways."
 - (1) "Unstable" from *akastastatos*, found only here. *Akastastasia* is similar and is translated "confusion" (Jas. 3:16).
 - (2) This man is not just weak in one area; he is weak and unstable in all areas.
- 3. Wisdom available to Christians in trials (1:9-11).
 - a. "But let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted" (1:9).
 - (A) Who is a brother of low degree?
 - (1) Guy N. Woods thinks he is a Christian who has lost his riches;

"one who, because of external circumstances, has been brought low" (p. 46). I see no reason to think he has lost his riches. He may never have had any.

- (2) R. C. H. Lenski translates the expression, "Now let him boast, the brother, the lowly one, in his high position" (p. 533).
 - (3) James Tolle: **Notes on James**. "The poverty-stricken brother who trusts in God is of 'low degree' in the estimate of the world, but he is of 'high estate' in the estimate of God because he possesses 'the unsearchable riches of Christ' (Eph. 3:8)" (p. 9).
- (B) "Low degree" from *tapeinos* which basically means low-lying," but is used figuratively in the New Testament.
- (1) The expression refers to a man's outward, material circumstances.
 - (2) Lenski refers to this man as "one who is poor in earthly wealth, lowly in his entire station in life" (p. 533).
 - (3) "By 'lowly' he had in mind not the Christian grace of humility but simply outward social status, that is, that of a slave or beggar" (James Adamson, **The Epistle of James**, p. 62).
- (C) "Rejoice" from *kauchastho* and is translated "glories" (1 Cor. 1:31), "boast" (2 Cor. 9:2). Very few times is the word translated "joy" or "rejoice" (Rom. 5:2, 11; Phil. 3:3; Jas. 1:9; 4:16).
- (1) The word suggest boasting or glorying in that which is right for a Christian (1 Cor. 1:31).

- (2) "The present imperative calls upon the believer to adopt this as his characteristic response" (Hiebert, **The Epistle of James**, p. 89).
- (3) The exulting or glorying refers to his status as a child of the king.
- (a) 2 Cor. 6:17-18.
- (b) Hattie E. Buell expressed this truth in poetry:
- A tent or a cottage,
 why should I care?
 They're building a palace
 for me over there;
 Tho' exiled from home,
 yet, still I may sing:
 All glory to God,
 I'm a child of the king.
- (D) "Exalted" from *hupsei* and refers to his status as a child of the king.
- a. "But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away" (1:10).
- (A) "Rich" from *plouios*, literally "of earthly possessions" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 679).
- (B) He is one "who does not need to work for a living" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 679).
- (C) Does this verse imply (or does any other verse teach) that riches *per se* are wrong? Cf. 1 Tim. 6:6-10, 17-19. Are rich men called into Christ's service (1 Cor. 1:26)?
- (D) Both words "brother" and "glory" seem to be implied in this verse. "Let the rich man glory or rejoice in that he is made low.
- (E) "Made low" from *peinosei* in contrast to "exalted" (*hupsei*) in verse 9.

- (1) There is no indication that the brother has lost his riches.
 - (2) Moffatt says that "the lowering of the rich brother is as inward as the raising of the poor brother" (Hiebert, **Epistle of James**, p. 93).
 - (3) "As the poor brother forgets all his earthly poverty, so the rich brother forgets all his earthly riches. The two are equals by faith in Christ" (Lenski, p. 535).
- (F) "Because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away."
- (1) James – like Jesus – often used figures from nature. The Old Testament is also full of nature figures.
 - (2) James quotes from Isaiah 4:6: "The flower of the field."
 - (3) The transitoriness of life in general and the rich man's in particular is presented here as it is elsewhere in scripture (1 Pet. 1:24).
 - (4) Adamson quotes H. B. Tristram as saying that "the downs of Bethlehem in February are one spangled carpet of brilliant flowers.... In May all traces of verdure are gone." Adamson adds: "The image then is both familiar and forceful, recalling the special and distinctive climate of Palestine. In the Mediterranean region the spring is brilliant but very brief" (p. 63).
 - (5) Of course, other men's lives are brief too, but other men's lives seem not to have flowered as have rich men's. There is a great temptation for the rich man to trust in uncertain riches

- (1 Tim. 6:7). Jesus speaks of the deceitfulness of riches (Mt. 13:22).
- (6) *Pareleusetai* means to pass away completely from the earth. "Heaven and earth shall pass away (*pareleusontai*), but my words shall not pass away" (Mk. 13:31).
- c. "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways" (1:11).
- (A) "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat."
- (1) "Is risen" (better "arises") from *anteleien* (*anatello*) and is gnomic or timeless aorist active indicative (Robertson, volume 6, p. 16).
- (a) Normally aorist is a definite historical event.
- (b) Gnomic aorist: "A generally accepted fact or truth may be regarded as so fixed in its certainty or axiomatic in its character that it is described by the aorist, just as though it were an actual occurrence. For this idiom we commonly employ the general present in English" (H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, **A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament**, p. 197).
- (2) "Burning heat" from *kausoni* and can mean either "heat" or wind."
- (a) NIV says "scorching heat."
- (b) Adamson translates "scorching wind" (p. 63).

- (c) Many scholars think James is discussing the Sirocco winds which come off the Arabian desert.
- (d) Adamson quotes from E. F. F. Bishop: "The temperature hardly seems to vary. Flowers and herbage wilt and fade, lasting as long as 'morning glory.' Anemones and cyclamen, carpeting the hill-sides of Galilee in spring, have a loveliness that belongs only to the past when the hot wind comes. Drooping flowers make fuel. The fields of lupins are here today and gone tomorrow" (pp. 64-65).
- (B) "But it withers the grass."
- (1) "Withers" from *exeranen* (*xeraino*), old verb from *xeros*, dry or withered, Mt. 12:10.
- (a) Another gnomic aorist active indicative.
- (b) Adamson thinks the gnomic may be used like the Hebrew perfect to "emphasize the suddenness and completeness of the withering" (p. 63).
- (C) "And the flower thereof falls."
- (1) "Flower" from *anthos* does not refer to the bloom of the grass, but to wild flowers that grow up with the grass" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 66).
- (2) "Falls" from *exepesen* (*ekpipto*), "to fall out, or off." *Exepesen* is gnomic aorist.
- (a) *Ekpipto* is translated "fell off" (Acts 12:7), "has taken none effect"

- (Rom. 9:6), "charity never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8) and "you are fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4).
- (b) James uses language which parallels that of the Old Testament (Isa. 40:6; Job 28:2).
- (D) "And the grace of the fashion of it perishes."
- (1) "Grace" from *euprepreia* and refers to the outward appearance. This word is used only here in the New Testament.
- (2) "Fashion" from *prosopou* and means the face of it.
- (a) J. H. Ropes uses the term "goodly appearance" (Adamson, p. 64).
- (b) *Prosopon* is translated "face" (Mt. 6:16), "countenance" (Lk. 9:29), "outward appearance" (2 Cor. 10:7).
- (3) James apparently had the same appreciation for nature which we find in our Lord's sayings (Mt. 6:28-30).
- (4) "Perishes" from *apoleto* (*apollumi*, gnomic aorist).
- (E) "So also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."
- (1) "Fade away" from *maranthesetai* (*maraino*) and means "to extinguish a flame, a light" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 16). Used only here in the New Testament.
- (2) "Ways" from *poreiais*. *Poreuo* is translated "journeyings" (Lk. 13:22).
- (a) Mayor thinks the word should be taken literally "referring to the journeyings and voyages of merchants" (p. 47).

- (b) It seems to me James is saying that the rich man will die as he goes about his regular tasks. Just as the poor man dies so does the rich.
4. Blessings of constancy under trial. "Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him" (1:12).
- a. "Blessed is the man that endures temptation."
- (A) "Blessed" from *makarios*, almost always translated "blessed" (Mt. 5:3, 4, 5, 6, etc.). The word is translated "happy" in Acts 26:2; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14.
- (B) Guy N. Woods thinks that "happy" is an inadequate term. "Blessedness is a condition resulting from a state of inner peace; whereas, happiness is dependent on external circumstances" (p. 52).
- (C) It usually refers to "the distinctive religious joy which accrues to man from his share in the salvation of the kingdom of God" (Hauch, TDNT, volume 4, p. 367).
- (D) "Man" from *aner*, not *anthropos*.
- (1) In verse 7 James uses the word *anthropos* (generic word for man or human being) and in verse 8 he uses *aner* (male). Cf. 1:23; 2:2; 3:2.
- (2) Hiebert thinks he alternates the word for variety (p. 87).
- (E) "Endures" from *hupomone* (*humomene*), steadfastness, constancy.
- (F) "Temptation" from *peirasmon*. The word here almost certainly means "trial."

Christians should resist temptations—
not endure them.

b. "For when he is tried, he shall receive the
crown of life."

(A) "Is tried" (*dokimos genomenos*) is better
translated "having become approved"
(Robertson, volume 6, p. 17).

(B) "He shall receive the crown of life."

(1) "Crown" from *stephanon*; he shall
receive life as a crown.

(2) "Fear none of these things which you
shall suffer: behold, the devil shall
cast some of you in prison, that you
may be tried (*peirasthete*); and you
shall have tribulation ten days; be
faithful unto death, and you shall
receive a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

(3) "Beloved, think it not strange con-
cerning the fiery trial (*peirasmon*) which
is to try you, as though some strange
thing happened unto you: but rejoice,
inasmuch as you are partakers of
Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory
shall be revealed, you may be glad
also with exceeding joy" (1 Pet. 4:12-
13).

(C) "Which the Lord has promised to them
that love him."

(1) *Tois agaposin auton*, literally "those
loving him." It does not mean those
who once loved the Lord, but those
who continue to love him.

(2) Does the expression imply that sal-
vation is conditional?

5. How temptation works (1:13-16).

a. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am
tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted

- with evil, neither does he tempt any man" (1:13).
- (A) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God."
- (1) Have you ever heard anyone say, "God placed on me more than I could bear"?
 - (2) *Peirazo* in this context means to tempt to evil, not just to test. Satan's attempts to lead Christ into sin is a good example (Mt. 4:1-11).
 - (3) "Every evil act is by some justified on the ground that God created our bodies and placed in them desires which he should not have done if he is to regard their gratification as sinful" (Woods, p. 57)!
 - (4) Flip Wilson used to say, "The devil made me do it." Cf. 1 Cor. 10:12-13.
 - (5) Most of us would like to shift the blame to someone else – anyone else (Adam and Eve).
- (B) "For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man."
- (1) *Apeirastos kakon* suggest that God can have no experience with evil so that he cannot be tempted.
 - (2) Men cannot blame God for their temptations to evil nor their fall into sin.
- b. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed" (1:14).
- (A) "Every man is tempted."
- (1) Temptation is universal since sin is universal (Rom. 3:23).
 - (2) "Is tempted" is present tense and

shows that it is an experience that takes place over and over.

(B) "When he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed."

(1) *Exelkomenos* from *ek*, out of, and *helkomia*, to draw. The word was used of fishing; *deleaxomenos* of hunting.

(2) *Deleazo*, an old verb meaning to catch a fish with bait. "To trap by enticing delights" (Woods, p. 59).

(3) "Desire" from *epithumia* and can be used either for legitimate or illegitimate desire.

(a) When it means illegitimate desire, it is usually translated "lust" (Rom. 7:7).

(b) "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23).

c. "Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death" (1:15).

(A) "Then when lust has conceived."

(1) Lust is presented under the figure of a woman, a prostitute probably.

(2) "Conceived" from *sullabousa* (*sul-lambano*, to grasp together). It is used in a "technical sense of a woman's taking seed in conception" (Lk. 1:24) (Robertson, volume 6, p. 18).

(3) Lust becomes the mother of sin.

(B) "It brings forth sin."

(1) *Tikei hamartian*, bears sin. As a mother gives birth to a child, so lust bears a child called "sin."

(2) The fruit of lust is sin.

- (C) "And sin when it is finished, brings forth death."
- (1) "Finished" from *apoteleo* (full-grown); not mature but complete in all its parts and functions.
 - (2) "Brings forth death from *apokuei thanaton*.
 - (a) *Kueo* means to be pregnant, to give birth to.
 - (b) *Thanatos* means death. Do you remember William Cullen Bryant's "Thanatopsis" (a view of death)? A thanatologist is one who studies death and dying. This new science was popularized by Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and has become a major emphasis in many communities.
 - (3) An example of temptation which leads to sin.
 - (a) Stage one: "I see something in a shop. I say to myself, 'I should love to have that—but I cannot afford it.'" (No harm done).
 - (b) Stage two: "I know! I will steal it! That is, lust, impregnated by the devil, 'conceives' the notion and 'gives birth' to the act of theft."
 - (c) Stage three: "That sin, unless (however late, like the penitent thief) I will properly repent before my physical death, will 'being fully grown,' cause my damnation and my spiritual 'death' at the Day of Judgment" (Adamson, p. 73).
-

- d. "Do not err, my beloved brethren" (1:16).
- (A) Why would James be concerned about one's erring unless one really can err?
 - (B) "Be not deceived" from *me planasthe*.
 - (1) *Me* with the present imperative means, "Stop being deceived."
 - (2) *Planasthe* means to be led astray. Our word "planet" comes from this Greek word.
 - (C) *Adelphoi mou agapetoi* shows James' love for these brethren. Does not love cause one to warn of sin and its consequences (Acts 20:31)?
6. God is the fountain of all good (1:17-18).
- a. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning" (1:17).
 - (A) "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above."
 - (1) "Every good gift" from *pasa dosis agathe*: "Every good endowment and every perfect" (RSV).
 - (2) Both nouns—*dosis* and *dorema*—are derived from *didomi*, to give.
 - (a) *Dosis* signifies the act of giving.
 - (b) *Dorema* refers to the gift.
 - (3) The act of giving and the gift itself are from God and therefore good and perfect.
 - (4) "Good" from *agathe* in the sense it contributes to our welfare, to our salvation.
 - (5) "Perfect" from *teleion*, complete, not falling short of its purpose (Phil. 3:11-14).
 - (6) "From above" from *anothen*, the same

- word translated again (John 3:3).
- (B) "And comes down from the Father of lights."
- (1) "The Father of lights" from *apo tou patros ton photon* may refer to God as the author of the heavenly bodies.
 - (2) God is the source of all light—both physical and spiritual. "This then is the message we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
 - (3) God is the Father of Jesus Christ who "lights the way of every man that comes into the world" (John 1:9).
- (C) "With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
- (1) With God, the source of light and life, "there is no variableness" (*parallage*), variation, turning.
 - (a) God is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8).
 - (b) "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore your sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6).
 - (2) In God there simply is not variation, no turning. He is absolutely constant. We can totally depend on him.
- b. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures" (1:18).
- (A) The word "will" in the King James Version is a noun, the will of God. In the Greek the word is a verb and should read "having willed (it)," first aorist passive participle of *boulomai*, to will, to wish, to intend, to be disposed.

- (B) "Begot" from *apekuesen*, first aorist active indicative (*apokeuo*, "he brought forth." "Sin...brings forth (*apokuei*) death" (1:15). *Kueo* means to be pregnant.
- (C) The begetting was accomplished "with the word of truth."
- (1) "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever" (1 Pet. 1:23).
 - (2) Jesus explained in his Parable of the Sower that "the seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11).
 - (3) There is no begetting and no being born again without the seed—the word of God.
- (D) The word "kind" (*tina*) suggests the figurative use of the word "firstfruits" in this verse.
- (E) "Firstfruits" from *aparchen* and is related to *aparchomai*, to make a beginning. The Greek word is always singular, but the English is always plural. "Fruit" is a collective noun—both in the Greek and in the English.
- (1) The idea of firstfruits was drawn from Old Testament imagery (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:9-11; Dt. 18:4).
 - (2) The firstfruits offered to God guaranteed the rest of the harvest.
 - (3) "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). Christ was not the first to be raised from the dead, but his resurrection was different from any other. His resurrection guarantees ours.

C. Hearing and doing the word (1:19-27).

1. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (1:19).
 - a. "Wherefore" suggests that something has been said from which James draws a conclusion. He has shown the kind of God with whom we deal (1:17). He has argued that we are the firstfruits of his creatures (1:18). Wherefore, we are to live in harmony with these great blessings.
 - b. "My beloved brethren" shows James' concern for his fellow church members—his identification with them. James shows an attitude of humility in writing to his brothers and sisters in Christ. Guy N. Woods suggests that the expression, "my beloved brethren," indicates (A) the same parentage, (B) the closest kinship, (C) deep and abiding affection (p. 74).
 - c. "Swift" from the Greek *tachus* (used only here in the New Testament) and means speedy, quick (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 814). Our English word "tachometer" is derived from the same stem.
 - (d) "Swift to hear" would involve the public reading of the word. Very little—if any—of the New Testament had been completed by the time James was written.
 - (e) "Slow to speak."
 - (A) "Slow to begin speaking, not slow while speaking" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 21).
 - (B) Dr. Robertson quotes this old proverb: "Many a man has had to repent of speaking, but never one of his holding his peace" (Robertson, **Studies in the Epistle of James**, p. 62). There are some

serious problems with that proverb.
What are they?

- (f) "Slow to wrath."
(A) There is a difference between anger and wrath, although the word *orge* is also translated anger (Mk. 3:5; Col. 3:8). *Orge* is almost always translated "wrath."
(B) Is it every right to be angry?
(1) Was Jesus ever angry? When he drove the money-changers from the temple, was he angry? "And when he had looked round about on them with anger" (Mk. 3:5).
(2) Is it possible to be angry and not sin (Eph. 4:26)?
(3) "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (Acts 17:16). "Stirred" from *parosuno* from which we get our word "paroxysm" which means to stir, to stimulate, to provoke.
- (g) There is a textual problem in this verse. The King James version based on Textus Receptus (the received text) has *hoste* (therefore), but other manuscripts have *iste* from *oida*, to know. "You know this, my beloved brethren" (RV, RSV, NIV and other late versions). It does not matter which is correct. Either version makes good sense.
2. "For the wrath of man works not the righteousness of God" (1:20).
a. "Wrath" (*orgen*) refers to violent, mental agitation, resulting from uncontrolled anger (Woods, p. 76). Anger seems to suggest a sudden flare up while wrath is a settled state.

- b. "Righteousness" (*dikaïosune*) "denotes the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ (Thayer, p. 149). Cf. Acts 10:34-35.
 - c. Anger and wrath can be misdirected and most of the time are positively destructive. Jonah's anger is a good illustration (Jonah 4:1, 4, 9).
3. "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (1:21).
- a. "Wherefore" refers to what James has just said in verses 19-20. Since "the wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God," then we ought to lay aside sinful and destructive attitudes.
 - b. "Lay apart" from *apothemenoi* (*apotithemi*), to put off, to lay aside. This expression refers to the practice of taking off one's soiled clothes (Rom. 13:12; Col. 3:8; Eph. 4:22, 25; 1 Pet. 2:1).
 - c. "Filthiness" from *ruparian* and generally refers to that which is dirty, filthy. Figuratively, it means uncleanness, evil.
 - d. "Superfluity of naughtiness."
 - (A) "Superfluity" from *perisseian* and means abundance, overflowing, exceeding. They were to get rid of all evil.
 - (B) "Naughtiness" from *kakia*, a generic term meaning malice, ill-will, malignity. In the New Testament the word is rendered "evil" (Mt. 6:34), "wickedness" (Acts 8:22), "maliciousness" (Rom. 1:29), and "malice" (1 Cor. 14:20).

- e. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word."
- (A) James drops the clothing metaphor and introduces an agricultural figure of the seed and the soil—maybe reflecting the Parable of the Sower (Mt. 13; Lk. 8).
- (B) "Receive" from *dexasthe* (*dechomai*) and involves a deliberate taking hold of—not an accidental reception. A reception of the word requires effort and energy on our part.
- (C) "Meekness" from *prautes* and suggests the humble spirit one must manifest when he approaches the Bible. If we approach the Bible with the attitude of haughtiness, we are not going to learn much from our Bible study.
- (1) "In a humble spirit welcome the message" (Williams).
- (2) Does the condition of the heart really matter that much? The Parable of the Sower is a great commentary of this verse.
- (D) "Engrafted" (*emphuton*) and is often translated "implanted."
- (1) The word refers to sowing in the heart—not grafting.
- (2) "Able" from *dunamis*, power, might. The ultimate salvation of our souls depends on our attitude toward and our reception of the word of God.
- (3) "The gospel of Christ is the power of God (*dumanis*) unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).
4. "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (1:22).
- a. Literal translation: "Keep on being doers of the word."

- b. "Be" means "become" (*ginesthe*). "Show yourselves more and more" to be doers of the word (Mayor, p. 69).
- c. "Doers" from *poietai*. The word is used only six times in the entire New Testament; four times in James.
- (A) Again, the Parable of the Sower needs to be studied in conjunction with this section of James.
- (B) Tennyson's "Northern Farmer" describes how one listener behaved. I wonder how many of us have the same attitude.

And I always came to his church
 Before my Sally was dead,
 And I heard him a humming away
 Like a buzzard clock over my head,
 And I never knew what he meant,
 But I thought he had something to say,
 And I thought he said what he ought
 to have said, and I came away.

- d. "Not hearers only." Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17), but faith which does not act is not really faith at all. The word must enter the heart and produce fruit.
- e. "Deceiving your own selves."
- (A) "Deceiving" from *paralogizomenoi*, *para*, beside, and *logizomai*, to reckon, to count. Literally, to reckon sideways, to cheat.
- (1) Their reasoning led them to think that hearing God's word was sufficient; they did not obey him.
- (2) "And this I say, lest any man should begile (*paralogizetai*) you with enticing words" (Col. 2:4).
- (B) Self-deception may be the very worst kind

- of deception. It would be very difficult to overcome or counteract.
5. "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass" (1:23).
 - a. "If a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer."
 - (A) "If" is a condition of the first class, assumed to be true. This is not a hypothetical case.
 - (B) God expects us to translate our hearing into action. The gospel was designed to change our lives. The "lordship salvation controversy" is centered on this biblical concept.
 - b. "He is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass."
 - (A) "Beholding" from *katanoeo*, literally to put the mind down.
 - (1) This is not a cursory glance at his face. He studies his face and takes careful note of any imperfections. The word connotes considering, discovering, perceiving.
 - (2) The mirrors were not of glass, but of tin or copper or some other metal which could be polished, like the mirrors which military personnel carry.
 - (B) "Natural face" from *prosopon tes geneoseos*, literally the face of his birth.
 6. "For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was" (1:24).
 - a. Mayor remarks, "Just a glance and he is off" (p. 79).
 - b. "He glanced at himself and off he has gone

- and straitway he forgot what sort of man he was" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 23).
- c. What would make a man forget his condition? "Cares, riches and pleasures of this life" (Lk. 8:15).
 - d. "Straightway forgets what manner of man he was." There are no permanent changes in the person's life. He saw his flaws in the mirror, but did nothing about them.
 - e. Do we sometimes read our Bible, listen to a sermon and pay no attention, even though we recognize that some changes ought to be made?
7. "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (1:25).
- a. "Looks" from *parakupsas* and indicates one who stoops to look into, to gaze, to peer intently.
 - (A) "And he stooped down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet he went not in" (John 20:5). The words "and looking in" were inserted by the translators. They were not in the original Greek.
 - (B) "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre" (John 20:11).
 - b. "The perfect law of liberty."
 - (A) Many modern theologians think of law as always being too restrictive and contrary to the freedom we enjoy in Christ.
 - (B) "James would be utterly without sympathy with that school of thought which alleges that the Old Testament consisted wholly of law, but no grace; the New

Testament wholly of grace, but no law" (Guy N. Woods in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Harding Graduate School of Religion's 1971 lectureship, p. 196).

- (C) "Law" simply means a rule or code of action. What would conditions in our nation be if there were no laws? Every man would be free to do what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). Anarchy—the worst possible legal and social condition—would prevail.
 - (D) "Perfect" from *teleion* and means completeness, fulness, maturity. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psa. 19:7).
- c. "Continues therein."
- (A) There is an intended contrast between the hearer of verse 24 and the one in this verse. "For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was" (1:24).
 - (B) "Continues" from *parameinas* and means to stay beside. The root word is the same as the Greek word (*hupomone*) translated "endurance." "And having this confidence I know that I shall abide (*meno*) and continue (*sumparameno*) with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith" (Phil. 1:25).
 - (C) This man examines the scriptures ("searches" — Acts 17:11) for the purpose of doing what God requires. It is not simply an intellectual exercise. The Bible is intellectually stimulating and fulfilling, but that is not the purpose for which God gave it.

- d. "He being not a forgetful hearer."
- (A) The Greek tense says: This is a genuine characteristic of this man: He usually does not forget; it is his habit not to forget.
 - (B) Study, preaching and teaching are designed to change attitudes and behaviors. Ideas do have consequences, according to Dr. Richard Weaver. Solomon wrote, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).
 - (C) Being a forgetful hearer does not necessarily mean that one has actually forgotten what he heard in the pulpit or in the classroom. It means that what he heard made no difference in his life.
- e. "A doer of the work."
- (A) This expression stresses habitual activity. He is always a doer of the Lord's work.
 - (B) Mt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46.
- f. "This man shall be blessed in his deed."
- (A) "This man," that is, the one who looks and continues and does.
 - (B) "Blessed" from *makarios*, the same word Jesus used so many times in the Beatitudes (Mt. 5).
 - (C) Literally, "in his doing" (*poiesis*). This word would imply a whole life of obedience, not just isolated acts of doing.
8. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (1:26).
- a. In verse 26 and 27, James is rebuking a religious "doing" which leaves the manner of life unchanged. In some senses, the current controversy over "lordship salvation" hinges on this same concept.
 - b. "If any man seem to be religious."

- (A) Condition of the first class, assumed to be true.
- (B) "Any man" from *tis* is indefinite so that the one under consideration cannot be known.
- (C) "Seem" from *dokeo* and means to think. He may keep the outward forms of religion, but he is not inwardly committed.
- (D) "Religious" from *theskos* and points to the outward observance of religious ritual. Lenski calls it "cultus exterior" (p. 559). James does not deny that the man is religious in some sense.
- (E) "Bridles not his tongue."
 (1) "Bridles" from *chalinagogeio*, *chalinos*, a bridle, and *ago*, to lead. The same word is used in James 3:2.
 (2) "Tongue" from *glossan*, his physical organ. He must have a bridle on his own tongue—not that of another.
- (F) "Deceives his own heart."
 (1) *Apaton* is the word for deceit. A man plays a trick on himself.
 (2) Do you remember the old Negro spiritual: "Everybody's talking about heaven ain't going there?"
- (G) "This man's religion is vain."
 (1) "Religion" from *theskeia*, outward manifestation of devotion. He is not condemning the ceremonies or rituals of religion, but he is condemning these when they are not accompanied by obedience from the heart.
 (2) "Vain" from *mataios* and means that this man's religion does not bring him to the proper goal. His religion amounts to nothing. "They are unprofitable and vain" (Tit. 3:9).

9. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (1:27).
- a. "Pure" from *kathara* (English: Catharsis) and denotes that which is pure and free from moral pollutions and corruptions (Hiebert, p. 141).
 - b. "Undefiled" from *amiantos* and means uncontaminated. "An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled" (1 Pet. 1:4).
 - c. "Religion" from *threskia* and refers to outward, external actions and devotions. This verse does not condemn the external rituals of religion, such as, singing, the Lord's supper. However, worship is acceptable only if it comes from the heart that is attuned to obedience to God's will.
 - d. "Before God and the Father." Man's worship must be offered to God who is our heavenly Father. "God is spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 - e. "Visit" from *episkeptomai*, to see, to inspect with a view to aiding. Present infinitive: "Keep on visiting."
 - (A) Social calls—as important as they may be in some instances—are often not enough.
 - (B) The New Testament's use of the word "visit":
 - (1) "Sick and you visited me" (Mt. 25:36).
 - (2) "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God has visited his people" (Lk. 7:16).

- (C) The Greek *episkeptomai* belongs to the same root as *episkopos* (bishop or overseer, Acts 20:28).
- g. "Orphans" from *orphanous*, those who have lost their parents whether through death or otherwise.
- h. "Widows" from *cheras*, those who have lost their husbands through death or desertion.
- i. "Affliction" from *thlipsis*, pressing, pressure, oppression.
- (A) Widows in the ancient world were under enormous pressure. Regulations concerning the care of widows were given by Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 5).
- (B) Were all widows to be supported by the church (1 Tim. 5:9-10)?
- (C) Who has the primary responsibility of caring for widows?
- j. "Keep" from *terein*, present active infinitive, and means to continue to keep himself unspotted from the world.
- k. "Unspotted" from *aspilon*, a, not, and *spilos*, spot.
- (A) Jesus Christ is described as a lamb "without spot (*aspiloi*) and blameless (*amomou*)" (1 Pet. 1:19).
- (B) 2 Cor. 6:17-7:1.
- l. "World" (*kosmou*) does not refer to the created universe, but to the evil that is in the world (1 John 2:15-17; Jas. 4:4).

Living For Jesus: Questions For James 1

- 1 James calls himself a "servant" (slave) of Jesus Christ. What is the meaning of that term? Is that demeaning of Christians?
- 2 What is the likely meaning of "the twelve tribes scattered abroad?"
- 3 Explain the meaning of the term, "divers temptations."
- 4 Christians in every age have been tried. What does that mean? What blessings are attached to faithfulness in the face of trials.
- 5 How does a Christian obtain wisdom? Is there a difference between wisdom and knowledge?
- 6 Define the word "upbraids."
- 7 Explain the meaning of the term, "double-minded man."
- 8 There was a conflict between the high-minded and the humble people. What does James say about "the person of low degree" and the rich?
- 9 Describe how temptation works.
- 10 Explain the difference between "good gift" and "perfect gift."
- 11 What is the meaning of "variableness" in reference to God?
- 12 Christians are a "kind of firstfruits of his creatures." What does that mean?
- 13 Explain: "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness."
- 14 Is hearing alone enough or must one be a doer of the work?
- 15 If a man hears and fails to do, what does James compare his behavior to?
- 16 How important is bridling the tongue?
- 17 What is "pure religion and undefiled before God?"

Chapter 2

The Epistle Of James

CHAPTER 2

A. God is no respecter of persons (2:1-13).

1. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons" (2:1).

a. The expression, "My brethren," begins a new thought and is a very strong rebuke of the church for practicing illegitimate discrimination.

b. "Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ."

(A) "Have" from *me echete*, present active imperative, and is an exhortation to stopping holding the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons.

(B) "The faith" does not refer to Christ's faith, but to the system of faith he established, New Testament Christianity.

c. "The Lord of glory." There appears to be an identification of Jesus Christ with the *Skekinah* or "glory" of God (Ex. 24:17; 40:34; Numb. 14:10).

d. "With respect of persons."

(A) "Show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RSV).

(B) "Respect of persons" comes from one word — *prosopolempsiais*.

(1) The literal meaning is face (*prosopon*), *lambano*, to lay hold of, to receive or to lay hold of the face.

(2) The Greek "denotes respect of persons, partiality, the fault of one who, when

responsible to give judgment, has respect to the position, rank, popularity, or circumstances of men, instead of their intrinsic conditions, preferring the rich and powerful to those who are not so, Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:1" (Vine, p. 851).

2. "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment" (2:2).
 - a. The Greek indicates that the case was a hypothetical case, but certainly not an unusual one.
 - b. "Assembly" from *sunagogen*, the place of assembly. The word "synagogue" has the same basic meaning as "church" *ekklesia*.
 - c. "Gold ring" from *chrusodaktulios*, literally "gold-fingered" (Hiebert, p. 151).
 - d. "Goodly apparel" from *estheti lampra*, bright and shining clothing.
 - e. The poor man also visits the assembly. One elder said concerning the poor of his town: "They would not feel comfortable here."
 - f. "Vile" from *rhupara*, dirty, shabby, filthy, (Jas. 1:21).
3. "And you have respect to him who wears the gay clothing, and say to him, Sit here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand there, or sit here under my footstool" (2:3).
 - a. "Have respect" from *epiblepsete*, to look upon. The inference is to look upon with favor.
 - b. "Gay" from *lampra*, bright garment. The eyes of the church members are fixed with admiration on this man—the man whose clothes suggest wealth and prominence.
 - c. "Sit here in a good place." The rich is given a place of honor because he is rich.

- d. To the poor: "Stand over there or sit here under my footstool."
 (A) A footstool is not even offered the poor man. He is to sit under the footstool.
 (B) "On the floor close to my footstool" (Mayor, p. 84).
- e. Would church members ever act like that?
4. "Are you not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts" (2:4)?
- a. "Partial" from *diekrithete* (*diakrino*) and literally means to have a divided mind. "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" (*diakrinomenos*). For he that wavers (*diakrinomenos*) is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed" (Jas. 1:6). James is accusing some of being guilty of social discrimination.
- b. What was our Lord's attitude toward the poor? Can we afford to have a different attitude toward anything than Jesus had?
- c. Those who discriminate "are become judges of evil thoughts."
 (A) The Greek says "judges with evil thoughts."
 (B) "Thoughts" from *dialogismos*, reasonings. The word does not necessarily evil, but when the word "evil" (*ponoron*) is added to it, there can be no doubt as to its meaning. "They became evil in their imaginations (*dialogismois*), and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:21).
- d. The Christians to whom James wrote were guilty of having divided minds.
5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him" (2:5)?

- a. James encourages these Christians to listen, to give heed. "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rev. 2:7).
- b. In spite of his rather sharp criticism, James speaks with love for his brethren. A great lesson for all preachers.
- c. "Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?"
 - (A) "Did not God choose?"
 - (1) God does not love the poor more than the rich, but the poor are more like to respond to the gospel invitation.
 - (2) The choosing was not arbitrary, but according to the obedience and character of those responding.
 - (B) The poor are not righteous because they are poor; neither are the rich evil because they are rich. However, riches do present peculiar temptations (1 Tim. 6:6-10). Jesus speaks of "the deceitfulness of riches" (Mt. 13:22). "For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26).
 - (C) "Rich in faith."
 - (1) Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).
 - (2) Christ said to the church in Smyrna: "I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich)" (Rev. 2:9).
 - (D) "And heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them who love him."
 - (1) The righteous poor on earth will be compensated in the heavenly kingdom.

- (2) The poor – and the rich – have to love him.
- (3) “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mt. 5:3).
6. “But you have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats” (2:6)?
- a. “Despised” from *etimasate*, dishonored, insulted.
- (A) Why do certain people despise the poor? Because they are poor and to some extent powerless because of their poverty.
- (B) Paul used the same Greek word (*atimazo*) in the following verse: “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves” (Rom. 1:24).
- b. “Oppress” is from *katadunasteuousin*, literally “to act like a potentate.” A verb with a similar meaning (*katakurieuontes*) is translated “lording it over” (1 Pet. 5:3).
- (A) Such oppression is strong condemned – both in the Old Testament and in the New.
- (B) Amos accused certain women in Israel of oppressing the poor (Amos 4:1).
- (C) It makes no difference who does the oppressing or who the people are who are oppressed, God despises such behavior.
- c. “Draw” from *kelkousin*, an old word which signifies violent treatment.
- (A) Maybe the violent treatment was motivated by religious hatred or it may have been simply because they were poor.

- (B) There is no suggestion that the poor had committed any crimes.
 - (C) The judgment seats were the courts of the land. Do the poor in our day have much chance of receiving justice in our courts?
 - (D) F. Lee Bailey's book, **The Defense Never Rests**, says that right and wrong have little to do with the courts. It depends on the lawyers you can afford.
 - (E) If rich or poor commit crime, they deserve to be punished (1 Pet. 4:15-16). God forgives men when they repent and seek forgiveness, but his forgiveness does not keep them from being punished by the law of the land.
7. "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by which you are called" (2:7)?
- a. "Blaspheme" from *blasphemousin* and means to speak evil of or to speak disrespectfully. The tense of the verb suggests they make a habit of doing it.
 - b. "Worthy" from *kalos* and means "honorable" (RV), "beautiful" (Williams), "noble" (NIV).
 - c. What is "that worthy name"?
 - (A) "The name is undoubtedly ... the name of Jesus Christ" (Roberts: **The Letter of James**, p. 76).
 - (B) It is not possible to prove what name in the mind of James, but the name "Christian" seems more likely.
 - d. "By which you are called."
 - (A) "Is it not they who blaspheme the honorable name which was invoked over you" (RSV)? Some writers think James is speaking of the baptismal formula which was invoked over those being baptized.

- (B) "Were called" literally means "which is called upon you." This may refer to the name of Christ in which they were baptized, but it could not be proved (Mt. 28:19-20; Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:14, 16).
8. "If you fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well" (2:8).
 - a. The expression, "royal law," literally means "the law of the king."
 - b. For the Christian, Christ is our king and has the right to rule over us.
 - c. The scripture which James had in mind was Leviticus 19:18.
 - d. "Fulfil" from *teleite*, complete, fill up. We fulfill the royal law by obeying it.
 - e. Loving one's neighbor as oneself was taught in the Old Testament as well as in the New.
 - (A) Is it possible the James' hearers were attempting to justify their failure to help others by appealing to the law of Moses?
 - (B) In Leviticus 19:18, the "neighbor" seems to be limited to "the children of thy people."
 - (C) Jesus enlarged upon this great principle (Lk. 10:30-37).
 - (1) The lawyer asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"
 - (2) Jesus answered his question by telling the story of the Good Samaritan.
 - f. If we want to know what doing well means, we have to turn to the scriptures to see what God demands – what he calls doing good.
 9. "But if you have respect of persons, you commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (2:9).
 - a. The New Testament has much to say about Christians' having respect of persons (Acts

- 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:1).
- b. "If" is condition of the first class and suggests that this sin was actually present among these early Christians.
 - c. In the preceding verse, James tells us what doing good entails; in this verse he contrasts doing good with committing sin.
 - d. "You commit sin" is literally "you work sin" (*ergazesthe*).
 - e. Is James actually teaching that discrimination based on race, color, social standing and national origin "sinful?"
 - f. "Convinced" actually indicates deliberate sin.
 - (A) The word implies being convicted by proof of guilt.
 - (B) "For everyone who does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (*elengchthe*)" (John 3:20).
 - (C) "Transgressors" from *parabatai*, to step across. "One who stands beside, then, one who oversteps the prescribed limit." (Vine, p. 1162).
10. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (2:10).
- a. "Shall keep" from *terese* and means to keep or to guard. It refers to one who meticulously adheres to the law. The Greek reads "the law as a whole he keeps."
 - b. "Offend" from *ptaisei* (*ptaio*), to trip, to stumble. Cf. Jas. 3:2; Rom. 11:11. The word "point" does not appear in the original. Literally, "trip moreover in one."
 - c. How could a man be guilty of the whole law when he offends in only one point?
 - (A) "Guilty" from *enochos*, to hold in or on.

- (B) The man is condemned by the law as if he were guilty of the whole law.
- (C) Since no man can keep the gospel or any other law perfectly, how can one expect to be saved?
11. "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if you do not commit adultery, yet if you kill, you are become a transgressor of the law" (2:11).
- Does this verse have a bearing on the theme of this section of James 2—respect of persons?
 - God is the author of all the commandments. While men may make distinctions and divisions in the law and regard some sins as being more serious than others, not so with God. Unless we repent of our sins, they will condemn us.
 - What is the purpose of the law? It exists to discipline man and to bring him into harmony with God's law.
 - "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). If God were not so gracious and merciful, no one could be saved.
12. "So speak, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (2:12).
- Both verbs—"speak" (*laleo*) and "do" (*poieo*)—are present active imperatives: "Keep on speaking and keep on doing."
 - God's law will judge us according to the divine standard: the law of liberty.
 - "The law of liberty" was designed of God to bring liberty—not to take away all restraints. Cf. 2 Peter 2:19.
 - There can be no liberty where there is no law.

13. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that has shown no mercy; and mercy rejoices against judgment" (2:13).
- a. God will show mercy in judgment on those who have faithfully served him and walked in the light.
 - b. For those who have shown no mercy, there will be no mercy.
 - (A) "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7).
 - (B) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses" (Mt. 6:14-15).
 - (C) "Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you" (Col. 3:13).
 - c. "Rejoices" from *katakauchatai*, to exult over. "Mercy rejoices against judgment."
 - (A) "Boast not against the branches. But if you boast, you bear not the root, but the root you" (Rom. 12:18).
 - (B) "Mercy cancels out judgment" (Woods, p. 128).
 - (C) "Mercy is clothed with the divine glory and stands by the throne of God" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 33).
- B. Faith and works (2:14-26).
1. "What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? Can faith save him" (2:14)?
 - a. James has already stressed that "hearers only" deceive themselves; "a doer of the work ... shall be blessed in his deed" (1:22, 25).
 - b. "Profit" from *ophelos* indicating increase. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages (*ophelos*:

- a noun not a verb) it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32).
- c. How can anyone's faith be genuine if he does not have works?
 - d. "Can faith save him?"
 - (A) Unfortunately, the majority of theologians seem to answer in the affirmative. The Bible answers the questions negatively.
 - (B) Faith is absolutely essential to our salvation (Heb. 11:6; Eph. 2:8-10).
 - (C) But the Bible does not teach faith alone.
 - e. This section of James gave Martin Luther considerable trouble. He could not harmonize it with Rom. 1:16-17 and 5:1.
2. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food" (2:15).
 - a. James provides an example of how useful faith without works is in our daily lives.
 - b. Some commentators have suggested that James may be talking about a married couple who were near starvation and cold.
 - c. "Naked" from *gumnoi*, without adequate clothing—not absolutely naked.
 - d. "Destitute" *leipomenoi tes ephemerou trophes*, lack of daily food. They do not have enough food for a day.
 - (A) I grew up poor, but I have never experienced real nakedness or lack of daily food.
 - (B) But there are millions of people in our world who go to bed hungry every night. They do not have adequate clothing either.
 3. "And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the

- body; what does it profit" (2:16)?
- a. Kind and compassionate words are important in our dealings with others, but when they are substituted for the help which the poor and the hungry need they become a mockery.
 - b. In this illustration, there is no attempt to meet the needs of the one James mentions. To the same extent faith without works can save a man. Simply, "Go in peace; be warmed and filled."
 - (A) What a contrast between this approach to religion and what James teaches in James 1:27: "Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."
 - (B) At times, words are all some suffering people need, but when people are hungry and cold, words can be cruel.
 - (C) Just as kind words cannot feed the hungry or clothe the naked so faith by itself cannot save the lost.
 - c. "Those things needful to the body" are the necessities of life—not a television set or a VCR.
 - d. What do words without action profit the poor? Nothing! Neither does faith without works.
4. "Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone" (2:17).
- a. The tense of the verb can be rendered: "If it keeps on not having works."
 - b. Faith must keep on having works if it is to be a living faith.
 - c. "Dead" from *nekra*—not *arge* (barren) as in verse 20.
 - d. Dead faith which is faith alone cannot save.
 - e. Remember that James was writing to Christ-

ians, but the same principle applies to everyone—Christians and non-Christians alike.

5. “Yea, a man may say, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (2:18).
 - a. Illustration: Christ’s telling Peter to walk on the water (Mt. 14:22-33). “O you of little faith, wherefore did you doubt” (Mt. 14:31)?
 - b. Apparently James is answering an objector: “You have faith...” “Show me your faith apart from your works.” How can anyone demonstrate his faith if he does not do what God commands?
 - c. James affirms that he can show his faith by his works.
 - (A) We show our faith in Christ by doing what he requires (Lk. 7:21; Lk. 6:46).
 - (B) But does doing what God commands mean that we can earn our salvation?
6. “You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe and tremble” (2:19).
 - a. James continues to respond to the objector. The man claims to have faith, but there is no real commitment—just intellectual acknowledgement of God’s existence.
 - b. Obviously, our being Christians must begin with belief in God (Heb. 11:6).
 - (A) James teaches that we do well when we believe in God and confess him with our lives.
 - (B) We must preach more on the existence of God and his qualities of love, mercy, goodness and so forth.
 - (C) But belief in the one God of the Bible is

not enough. We must also obey his commandments.

(1) "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them" (John 13:17).

(2) "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

(3) "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). "Grievous" from *barus* and denotes heavy, burdensome. God's commandments do not cause a burden on those who obey them.

c. "Devils" from *daimonia*, demons.

(A) The demons know by their contact with God and with his people that God exists. If faith alone is sufficient for man's salvation, then the demons are saved since they believe and even tremble.

(B) "Tremble" from *phrissousin*, to bristle as a sign of terror.

(1) The demons were in terror because they understand their ultimate fate. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:41).

(2) This is a very powerful and sobering illustration to show that faith without works will not save.

7. "But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead" (2:20)?

a. Literally, "do you wish to know?" (*theleis do gnonai?*)

b. "Dead" from *arge*, barren, fruitless.

c. "Every branch in me that bears not fruit he

takes away: and every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2).

8. "Was not our father Abraham justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar" (2:21)?
 - a. James gives Abraham as an example of the principle he has been discussing: "Faith without works is dead."
 - b. How does one harmonize what James teaches with Paul's statements concerning Abraham? "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that works is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that works not, but believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:1-5).
 - c. The Hebrew writer's teaching concerning Abraham helps to clarify a seeming contradiction between James and Paul. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.... By faith Abraham, when he was tried offered up Isaac: and he that received the promises offered up his only begotten son" (Heb. 11:8, 17).
 - d. "Justified" from *edikaiothe*, to pronounce or declare one to be just. "He was counted, reckoned, pronounced, declared to be in a right relationship with God" (Woods, p. 143).

- (A) One who is justified is acquitted, not regarded as an enemy of God anymore.
- (B) "And by hm all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:39).
- e. "By works" (*ex ergon*) literally out of works. God justifies a man when the works God requires are found in the man's life.
- f. Abraham "offered" Isaac on the altar.
 - (A) Why does James use the past tense since Abraham never actually burned his son as an offering to God?
 - (B) Abraham's offering his son Isaac was contemporary with God's declaring him to be righteous.
 - (C) Would Abraham have pleased God if he had not offered Isaac? Would faith alone have justified Abraham?
 - (D) The story of Abraham and Isaac is found in Genesis 22.
- 9. "Do you see how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect" (2:22)?
 - a. Jame's illustration about Abraham and Isaac makes it very plain that faith without works cannot save.
 - b. "Wrought" from *sunergei*, to work with, to cooperate with. "Faith and works kept on cooperating with each other to produce the result—Abraham's justification" (Woods, p. 145).
 - c. "By works" (*ton ergon*: out of works) was Abraham's faith made perfect.
 - d. "Made perfect" from *eteleiothe*, aorist passive indicative, to consummate, to complete, to finish.

(A) Martin Luther's problem was in attempting to show that faith alone (*sola fide*) saves.

(B) James shows how faith and works cooperate in the saving of men.

10. "And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (2:23).

a. "The scripture" (*en graphe*) was fulfilled (Gen. 15:6).

b. "The scripture" means that which is written and always refers to God's revelation to man.

c. "Was fulfilled" (*eplerothē*), the usual verb for the fulfilling the scripture. Genesis 15:6 was fulfilled when Abraham offered Isaac. In what sense was it fulfilled?

d. "Abraham believed God" – not believed in God, but believed God. What did he do when he believed God? He took God at his word and trusted God to make it all work out right.

e. "Counted" from *elogisthē*, deemed, considered. God considered Abraham's faith for righteousness. "Faith itself thus became an act of obedience which, in its exercise, and when at the moment, there were no additional duties devolving upon Abraham, God accepted as proof of Abraham's devotion" (Woods, p. 146).

f. Is faith a work or an act of obedience? If it is a work, what kind of work – meritorious work?

g. What could human beings desire more than to be a friend of God?

(A) God himself considered Abraham to be his friend.

- (B) "Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever" (2 Chron. 20:7)?
11. "You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone" (2:24).
 - a. Guy N. Woods has an excellent summary of what James has said concerning justification by works. "James' conclusion is established (1) by analogy (vv. 14-15); (2) by demonstration (vv. 17-18); (3) by example (a) in the case of demons (v. 19); (b) in the case of Abraham (vv. 21-23); (4) by inspired affirmation (vv. 14-26); (5) by an appeal to common sense (v. 24). 'You see' (from the array of evidence presented that it is 'by works,' that a 'man is justified' and 'not by faith only'" (p. 147).
 - b. This is certainly one of the crucial differences between the churches of Christ and many other religious groups.
 12. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way" (2:25)?
 - a. "Likewise" (*homoios*), in like manner. Just as Abraham was justified by works, so was Rahab the harlot.
 - b. "Harlot" from *porne*, prostitute. Our word "pornography" (writing about a prostitute) comes from this Greek word. Can you imagine a greater contrast between righteous Abraham and an immoral prostitute? The story of Rahab is found in Joshua 2:1-24).
 - c. "Had received" from *hupodexamene*, welcomed.
 - d. "Sent them out" from *ekbalousa*, having put

- them forth. The Greek verb (*ekballo*) denotes hurling them out, getting them out in a hurry.
- e. There are many questions concerning Rahab which we probably will never be able to answer fully – at least, not to the satisfaction of all.
 - (A) How did Rahab come to know Jehovah and have such respect for his people?
 - (B) Did God approve of Rahab's lying to save the spies from being captured?
 - f. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace" (Heb. 11:31).
 - g. Rahab is listed in the lineage of our Lord (Mt. 1:5).
13. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (2:26).
- a. "Without the spirit" is literally "apart from the spirit."
 - (A) Modern men are having great difficulty deciding the moment of death. Is it when the heart quits beating or when there are no brain waves?
 - (B) Knowing what the scriptures teach may not make it any easier to decide the moment of death, but men die when the spirit leaves the body.
 - b. "Dead" in this verse is *nekron*, not barren (*arge*).
 - c. How could any truth be plainer than this: "Faith without works is dead"?
 - d. "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found your works perfect before God" (Rev. 3:2).
 - e. "I know your works, that you have a name

that you live, but you are dead" (Sardis, Rev. 3:1).

- f. Christians who do not live according to God's revealed will are dead – lifeless (*nekron*) and barren (*arge*).

Living For Jesus: Questions For James 2

- 1 What does the expression "God is no respecter of persons" mean?
- 2 Discuss the illustration James uses to show the sinfulness of illegitimate discrimination?
- 3 Does God discriminate in favor of the poor, as some liberal theologians suggest?
- 4 What does it mean to blaspheme the "worthy name by which you are called?"
- 5 What is "the royal law?"
- 6 Is it really sinful to discriminate?
- 7 What does it profit a man if a man has faith alone?
- 8 How much good does it do the poor if we have faith alone?
- 9 Discuss: "Even so faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone."
- 10 If faith alone saves, why are not demons saved?
- 11 Was Abraham justified by faith alone? Explain.
- 12 Who was Rahab? How was she justified?

Chapter 3

The Epistle Of James

CHAPTER 3

- A. Preachers and others must control their tongues (3:1-12).
1. Responsibility of teachers. "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (3:1).
 - a. "My brethren" is used many times in James showing that James identified himself with the people to whom he wrote.
 - b. "Masters" from *didaskaloi*, teachers.
 - (A) James does not intend to discourage men's becoming teachers, but he is discussing the enormous responsibility of being teachers. He wants all teachers to know that they are accountable to God for their teaching—the content, their manner of teaching, their lives, etc.
 - (B) Dangers involved in being teachers:
 - (1) Leading others astray (Mt. 23; 2 Pet. 2; Jude).
 - (2) Arrogance—superspiritual.
 - (C) What happens when we teach false doctrine or fail to control our tongues?
 - (D) "Don't many of you become teachers, if you are not certain you can control your tongue, that your teaching ministry will yield peaceable results and that you are willing to shoulder the responsibility for your work" (J. W. Roberts, *James*, p. 102).
 - c. "Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."

- (A) "Knowing" from *eidontes (oida)*, having full knowledge.
 - (B) Teachers have the greater responsibility; therefore, if they fail, they shall receive the greater condemnation (*krima*, judgment).
 - (1) "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Mt. 15:14).
 - (2) But there are great rewards for teaching and preaching the truth. The work of preaching must not be taken lightly. Souls are at stake.
2. Control of the tongue (3:2-8).
- a. "For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (3:2).
 - (A) "For in many things we offend all."
 - (1) James is not speaking specifically of our offending others with our tongues, although that is a real problem for most of us.
 - (2) The verse should read: "For in many things we all stumble (or offend)" (RV). "For we all make mistakes" (RSV). I doubt if the expression, "make mistakes," is strong enough to bring out the meaning of the original.
 - (3) "Stumble" from *ptaiomen*, to trip, to keep on stumbling.
 - (a) James includes himself among the stumblers—"we all stumble (or offend)."
 - (b) "Stumble" does not suggest in-

advertent mistakes; it implies a moral fault for which the sinner is morally responsible.

(B) "If any offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."

(1) The conditional statement assumes the reality of the stumbling; it is not just a theoretical observation.

(2) "In word" (*en logō*) does not mean just teaching, but in conversation in general.

(3) "Perfect" from *teleios*, mature. Control of the tongue is a sign of maturity.

(C) "Able also to bridle the whole body."

(1) "Able" from *dunatos*, capable, has the power. This a form of the same word translated "power" in Romans 1:16 and elsewhere.

(2) "Bridle" from *chalinagogesai*, denoting the ability to control our bodily functions. In our day when doing whatever comes naturally is the norm, this may sound a little archaic, but it is as essential in our day as it has ever been.

(3) With God's help and the support and encouragement of our brothers and sisters in Christ, we can control our bodies, including our tongues.

b. "Behold, we put bits in horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body" (3:3).

(A) "Behold" from *idou*, lo, see. The word comes from the Greek verb to see.

(B) "Bits" from *chalinous*, bridle—not bits.

(1) This is a strong metaphor suggesting

how hard it is to control the tongue and how necessary it is.

- (2) "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Psa. 39:1).
- (C) Big horses can be kept in check by the use of a very small bridle. We can turn about the whole body of a big horse with the bridle. What can a little tongue do?
- c. "Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor lists" (2:4).
- (A) The readers of the book of James had seen the great ships which sailed the Great Sea.
- (B) The horses in the preceding figure were large, but not so large as the ships on the Mediterranean.
- (C) The ships were driven by fierce winds. This figure is similar to what Matthew says. "But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary" (Mt. 14:24).
- (D) "Fierce" from *skleros*, harsh, stiff, hard. "I knew you were a hard man (*skleros*, Mt. 25:24).
- (E) In spite of the stiff winds, the governor of the ship is able to guide the ship by the use of the "helm."
- (1) "Helm" from *pedaliou*, rudder. *Pedon* means the blade of an oar.
- (2) James said, literally, "wherever the impulse of him who steers may will."
- (a) "Impulse" from *horme*, rapid,

- violent motion, used "here of the hand that worked the rudder" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 41).
- (b) "Steers" from *euthuontos*, to make straight.
- (c) These nautical terms were understood by James' readers.
- d. "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasts great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles" (3:5).
- (A) In comparison to the size of a horse, a bridle is a very small object; in comparison to the size of a ship, the rudder is even smaller. Likewise, in comparison to the human body, the tongue is a very small member.
- (B) This little member, however, can do some mighty big talking.
- (1) The tongue "boasts great things" (*megalauchei*, continually boasts great things).
- (2) The tongue has the potential for producing blessings for our fellowmen, but in too many cases it causes evil.
- (C) "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindles."
- (1) Think of the tremendous fires which are caused by a match or a spark.
- (2) A little fire can burn out of control. A tale or a lie can do enormous damage.
- e. "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell" (3:6).

(A) "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity."

(1) Homes are broken, communities are torn asunder and nations destroyed because of the improper use of the tongue. Either one says too much, or says it to the wrong person, or says it in the wrong way, or he does not say enough.

(2) "So is the man that deceives his neighbor, and says, Am I not in sport? Where no wood is, there the fire goes out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceases. As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a contentious man to kindle strife. The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. Burning lips and a wicked heart are like a potsherd covered with silver dross. He that hates dissembles with his lips, and lays up deceit within him; when he speaks fair, believes him not: for there are seven abominations in his heart" (Prov. 26:18-25).

(B) "The tongue is a fire" is a metaphor.

(C) "Iniquity" from *adikias*, unrighteousness.

(D) "So is the tongue among our members, that it defiles the whole body."

(1) Is James saying that the tongue is inherently evil?

(2) "Defiles" from *spilousa*, to stain. *Spilos*, spot. (*Aspilon*, unspotted, Jas. 1:27).

(3) The whole body is contaminated by the improper use of the tongue.

- (E) "Sets on fire the course of nature."
- (1) Here is a case where the words are plain, but the meaning is difficult to grasp.
 - (2) "Sets on fire" from *phlogizousa*, to ignite. Our English word "phlogiston" (inflammable) comes from this Greek word. *Phlox* means flame. The tense of the verb (present active participle) indicates that so long as the tongue is misused it keeps on setting on fire the course of nature.
 - (3) *Ton trochon geneseos*—"the course of nature"—is a very difficult expression.
 - (a) *Trochon* from *trecho*, to run.
 - (b) "The wheel of nature" (RV).
 - (c) "Our existence moves as a wheel, and this firebrand of a tongue sets it entirely aflame" (Lenski, p. 607).
- (F) "And is set on fire of hell."
- (1) *Phlogizomene*, present passive participle, the continual source of the fire is the tongue.
 - (2) Does this mean that hell is the source of an evil tongue or that eventually it will suffer the flames of hell? The former seems to be the meaning.
 - (3) The devil is delighted when Christians misuse their tongues.
- f. "For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and has been tamed of mankind" (3:7).
- (A) "Kind" from *phusis* and generally means nature, or order of nature. Cf. Romans 1:26; Ephesians 2:3.

- (B) "Beasts" from *therion*, probably four legged animals.
 - (C) "Birds" from *peteinon*, from *petomai*, to fly.
 - (D) "Serpents" from *herpeton*, from *herpo*, to crawl. Our word "herpetology," a branch of zoology, comes from this Greek word and deals with reptiles and amphibians."
 - (E) "Things in the sea" from *enalion*, *en*, in, *hals*, sea or salt.
 - (F) "Is tamed" is present passive indicative, man's continuous lordship over the animals.
 - (G) "Has been tamed" from *dedamastai* (*damazo*), perfect passive indicative, a past fact general in character.
 - (H) "Of mankind" literally "by the nature of the human" (*tei phusei tei anthropinei*).
- g. "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (3:8).
- (A) Since the tongue cannot be tamed, how can God hold us accountable for its improper use?
 - (B) "Can" from *dunatai*, is able, has the power, present tense.
 - (C) *Damasai* (aorist) and means he cannot tame the tongue or subdue it and then allow it to run loose. He must keep his tongue under constant restraint.
 - (D) "Unruly evil" from *akatrastaton kakon*, restless, unrestrainable, agitated.
 - (E) "Deadly poison" from *thanatephorou*, death-bringing poison. Is James exaggerating for effect? Is the tongue really all that bad?
3. Inconsistencies of the tongue (3:9-12).
- a. "Therewith bless we God, even the Father;

and therewith curse we men, which are made in the similitude of God" (3:9).

(A) With the tongue we can sing praises to God, pray to him as our heavenly Father and teach men the gospel of Jesus Christ.

(1) The ability to speak in symbolic language sets us apart from the animals.

(2) Man's speaking apparatus is evidence that there is design in the human body. If there is design, there has to be a designer.

(B) "Bless" from *eulogoumen*, literally a good word.

(C) The same tongue which is used to bless or praise God can also be used to "curse" men.

(1) "Curse" does not mean to take the Lord's name in vain, although taking the Lord's name in vain is a sinful use of the tongue.

(2) "Curse" from *kataraomai*, to pronounce a curse upon. The word involves wishing evil to come upon a person.

(3) "Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Rom. 12:14). "Bless" is the same Greek word in this verse.

(D) The inconsistency is praising God and cursing men who are "made in the similitude of God." "Similitude" from *homoiosin*, likeness, *homoioo*, to make like.

b. "Out of the mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (3:10).

(A) "Blessing" from *eulogia*, praise, eulogy, literally "good speaking."

- (B) "Cursing" does not mean taking the Lord's name in vain, but asking for curses to fall on our enemies. It is the opposite of "blessing."
- (C) "Ought not so to be" shows how inconsistent it is for Christians to use their mouths to praise God and to wish for tragedy to fall on our fellowmen.
- (D) How absolutely essential it is to keep watch over our tongues!
- (1) "He that keeps his mouth keeps his life: but he that opens wide his lips shall have destruction" (Prov. 13:3).
- (2) "Whoso keeps his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles" (Prov. 21:23).
- (3) "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Psa. 141:3).
- c. "Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter" (3:11)?
- (A) "Fountain" from *pege*, a spring. The word is from *opes* and refers to a fissure in the earth.
- (B) "Send forth" from *bruo*, to bubble up, to gush forth.
- (C) "Sweet" from the Greek *glukus* from which we get our "glucose."
- (D) "Bitter" from *pikron*, to prick, indicating the effect on the tongue and the taste-buds.
- (E) The reason the same fountain does not send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter is that the bitter would contaminate the sweet.
- d. "Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (3:12).

- (A) The figures James uses in this context were very familiar to the people of Palestine. Figs, olives and grapes were in great abundance in the Holy Land.
- (B) Even though the Palestinians were not plant scientists, they understood the principle James was discussing. In the very beginning of creation, God established the principle of reproduction: Like produces like or "after his kind." The technical term is "biogenesis": The development of life from preexisting life. The opposite idea is "abiogenesis" or spontaneous generation.
- (C) The words of James are very similar to what Jesus said. "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can you being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned" (Mt. 12:33-37).
- (D) Fig trees do not bear olive berries and grape vines do not produce figs. Each produces after his kind.
- (E) The logical conclusion: "No fountain can both yield salt water and fresh."

- (1) "Salt" from *halakon* and "fresh" from *gluku* (sweet).
 - (2) James insists that it is not possible praise and cursings come from the same mouth and heart.
- B. Wisdom not from above and wisdom from above (3:13-18).
1. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (3:13).
 - a. "Wise" from *sophos* and is applied to teachers in this context, although it has a much broader application than that.
 - b. The Revised Version translates this expression: "Wise and understanding."
 - c. "Endued" from *epistamon* (*epistamai*) and refers to an expert, a skilled and scientific person (Robertson, volume 6, p. 45).
 - (A) What constitutes a skilled teacher? Knowledge alone? Being able to speak effectively? A combination of both? Someone who lives what he preaches?
 - (B) Elders are to be "apt to teach" (1 Tim. 3:2). The Greek is *didaktikon*, literally skilled at teaching.
 - d. Wisdom is not to be found in the one who simply claims to be wise. "Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom."
 - (A) "Let him show" from *deixato*, to demonstrate. to prove.
 - (1) "Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (Jas. 2:18).
 - (2) How does one demonstrate that he is a skilled teacher?

- (B) "Conversation" (*anastrophes*) does not refer specifically to one's speech, but to one's manner of life in general.
- (1) Is James arguing that a teacher is supposed to live what he preaches?
- (2) Rom. 2:20-24; Eph. 4:1.
- (C) You may have heard the expression: We can talk a good talk but can we walk a good walk?
- (D) Our works prove that we are wise enough to follow the teaching of scripture.
- (E) Meekness shows how wise one really is. He does not have to go around boasting of his wisdom. It can be seen in his manner of life.
2. "But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth" (3:14).
- a. "Bitter envying" should be translated "bitter jealousy" (*zelon pikron*). *Zelon* may be used in either a good sense (John 2:17) or a bad sense (Acts 5:17, indignation).
- b. "Strife" from *erithian*, a pushing forward for personal ends, partisanship (Phil. 1:16).
- c. "Glory not" from *me katakauchasthe*, sometimes translated "rejoices" (Jas. 2:13). In this context it means that one is boasting of his knowledge or his wisdom. His boasting proves he is not wise.
- d. "Lie not" from *psuedesthe*, to play false. Our English word "pseudo" is derived from this Greek word.
3. "This wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (3:15).
- a. "This wisdom" refers to the teaching which is proved false by one's life. This is not genuine wisdom.

- b. This wisdom does not come from above (*anóthen*); it does not originate with God.
 - c. "Earthly" from *epigeios, ges*, earth. This does not refer to the physical earth, but to the evil which is on earth.
 - d. "Sensual" from *pseukike*, belonging to the sensuous or animal life.
 - e. "Devilish" from *daimoniodes*, that is, coming from the devil. There is a contrast between the wisdom which originates with God and that which comes from the devil.
4. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (3:16).
- a. "Envying" from *zelos*, jealousy, indignation (Acts 5:17) emulations (Gal. 5:20).
 - b. "Strife" from *eritheia*, contention (Rom. 2:8). The word means faction, self-seeking, rivalry.
 - c. "Confusion" from *akatastasia*, a state of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). The word suggests instability and denotes a state of disorder, disturbance, confusion and tumult (Vine, p. 219).
 - d. "Every evil work" from *phaulon pragma*, good for nothing.
5. "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (3:17).
- a. In contrast to the wisdom which does not come from above—that is, it comes from the devil—we have in God's book the wisdom which comes from above (*anóthen*).
 - b. "Pure" from *hagne*, the root meaning of which is holy (*hagios*).
- (A) "Pure from fault, not half-good and half-

- bad, like that above" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 47).
- (B) "And every man who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3).
- c. "Peaceable" from *eirene*, peace-loving, bringing peace. The particular form of the Greek is *eirenike* and is used only here and in Hebrews 12:11.
- d. "Gentle" from *epieikes* (from *eikos* meaning reasonable, fair).
- (A) Robertson says there is no English word which renders this word clearly (volume 6, p. 47).
- (B) The word is translated "gentle" (1 Pet. 2:18), "moderation" (Phil. 4:5) and "patient" (1 Tim. 3:3).
- e. "Easy to be entreated" from *eupeithes* from *eu*, wood, *peithomai*, complaint, approachable.
- (A) "Open to reason" (RSV).
- (B) "A Christian should be willing to admit that he is wrong" (Jack Lewis).
- (C) Could one be too open?
- f. "Mercy" from *elous*, practical help (Jas. 2:13, 16).
- g. "Good fruits" from *karpon agathon* (Mt. 7:17ff).
- h. "Without partiality" from *adiakritos, diakrino*, to judge or to distinguish.
- (A) "Without uncertainty" (RSV).
- (B) Not hesitating, not doubting (Jas. 1:6).
- i. "Without hypocrisy" from *anupokritos*, unhypocritical, sincere, unfeigned (Rom. 12:9).
6. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (3:18).
- a. "Fruit growing out of righteousness" (Woods,

- p. 195). Fruit which right living produces.
- b. "Harvest of righteousness" (RSV).
 - c. "Is sown in peace" refers to the realm where "righteousness grows and flourishes, and where its fruit, good deeds, abounds" (Woods, p. 196).

Living For Jesus: Questions For James 3

- 1 Why will "masters" (teachers" receive the greater condemnation?
- 2 Is there anyone who does not offend with his tongue?
- 3 What are the two items James uses to illustrate the power of the "little tongue?"
- 4 Discuss: "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindles." Is James exaggerating?
- 5 Is James teaching that misusing the tongue is the work of the devil?
- 6 If we cannot tame our tongues, what is the point in discussing the tongue?
- 7 Discuss the inconsistent use of the tongue.
- 8 James discusses two kinds of wisdom "wisdom not from above" and "wisdom from above." Discuss the differences between the two kinds of wisdom.

Chapter 4

The Epistle Of James

CHAPTER 4

A. Worldliness in the church (4:1-12).

1. Source of conflicts (4:1-10).

- a. "From whence comes wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members" (4:1)?

(A) What is the source of conflicts and disagreements among God's people? The principle probably has a broader application than just to the church, but that does seem to be its primary application.

(B) "Wars" from *polemoi*, a chronic state of conflict.

(1) The word does not necessarily refer to armed conflict, but it is the word Jesus used of "wars and rumors of war" (Mt. 24:6).

(2) James almost certainly was talking about troubles within the church.

(C) "Fightings" from *mache*, individual battles in a war. "In our literature only in plural and only of battles fought without actual weapons. Fighting, quarrels, strife, dispute" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 497).

(D) The conflicts and strife come from our lusts which war in our members.

(1) "Lusts" from *hedonai*, pleasures (our word "hedonistic").

(a) *Hedonai* means sinful, sensual

pleasures. Cf. Lk. 8:14: "Riches and pleasures of this life."

- (b) Our desires lead us to use sinful means to obtain what we desire.
 - (2) "War" from *stratuomenon* (*strateuo*), to carry on a campaign. ("War against the soul" 1 Pet. 2:11). This Greek word is the root word of our word "strategy."
 - (3) "Members" from *melesin*, and probably refers to the members of the church. It almost certainly has a wider application, however.
- b. "You lust, and have not: you kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: you fight and war, yet you have not, because you ask not" (4:2).
- (A) "Lust" from *epithumia*, a yearning passion for. We often desire to have what another individual or another nation has.
 - (B) They did not have because they were going about it in the wrong way.
 - (C) "Kill" from *phoneuete*, murder.
 - (D) "Desire" from *zeloo*, covet, desire strongly to possess.
 - (E) "Obtain" from *epituchein*. They could not get what their hearts desired.
 - (F) "Fight" from *machesthe* and "war" from *polemeite*.
 - (G) "You have not" from *ou dunasthe epituchein*, you are not able to obtain.
 - (H) Why could they not obtain? "Because you ask not."
 - (a) They needed desperately to approach the Lord and ask for their genuine needs.

- (b) "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (Jas. 1:5).
- c. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts" (4:3).
- (A) Apparently some were not asking God, but some were. Many of those who were asking were doing so with the wrong motives.
- (B) "Ask amiss" from *kakos aiteisthe*, asking from base or evil motives.
- (C) James has given two reasons why many prayers are not answered:
- (1) Not asking in faith (Jas. 1:6).
 - (2) Asking from selfish motives (Jas. 4:3).
- (D) "That you may consume it upon your lusts."
- (1) The wrong purpose for their asking (*hina*).
 - (2) "Consume" from *dapanesete*, spend, squander.
 - (3) "Lusts" from *hedonais*, pleasures.
- d. "You adulterers and adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (4:4).
- (A) How could preaching so negative do any good?
- (B) The words "adulterers" and "adulteresses" may or may not be intended to be understood literally. Adultery can be understood to mean unfaithfulness to Christ (Rom. 7:3). Cf. Hosea.
- (C) "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God?"

- (1) "Know" from *oida*, understand, perceive, know by reflection.
 - (2) "Friendship" from *philia*, love of a brother.
 - (3) "World" from *kosmos* is not speaking of the material universe nor of the people in the world. It is used of an attitude, a worldview, our devotion to worldly activities (1 John 2:15-17).
 - (4) "Enemy" from *echthra* (Rom. 5:10).
- (D) "Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."
- (1) In too many cases, it is not possible to distinguish those who claim to be Christians from the people of the world.
 - (2) Romans 12:2. If we are ever going to win the world to Christ, we cannot live like the people of the world.
- f. Do you think that the scripture says in vain, "The spirit which dwells in us lusts to envy" (4:5).
- (A) "Do you suppose it is in vain" (RSV)?
 - (B) "Scripture" from *graphe*. Which scripture does James have in mind?
 - (1) This is not a direct quote from any passage in the Bible.
 - (2) "Do you suppose that the general teaching of the scripture is without significance in this matter" (Woods, p. 214)?
 - (C) "Vain" from *kenos*, empty, not meaning what it says. Cf. Phil. 2:7, *ekenosen*.
 - (D) If "spirit" in this verse the Holy Spirit or man's spirit?
 - (1) The language seems to point to the human spirit. In this context, it seems to fit better.

- (2) Man's spirit dwells in us and leads to evil behavior.
- (E) "Dwells" from *katokesen*, to take up residence.
- (F) "Lusts to envy" from *phthonon epipothei*, long unto envying, or to envy yearns. "The spirit which is in you is a covetous and envious one" (Woods, p. 217).
- g. "But he gives more grace. Wherefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace unto the humble" (4:6).
- (A) God provides sufficient grace to meet all our needs. His grace is greater than our sin.
- (1) Cf. Romans 5:10–6:4. Even though God's grace is greater than our sin, we must not sin that grace may abound.
- (2) "Gives" from *didosin*, continuous giving.
- (B) "Wherefore he says, God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
- (1) "He" refers to God's speaking in the scripture (Prov. 3:34).
- (2) "Resists" from *antitassetai*, sets himself against. This is an old military term which literally means to array or to arrange oneself against (Rom. 13:2).
- (3) "Proud" from *huperephanois*, haughty persons. The word literally means to show oneself above others. The proud see no need for God. They imagine they have all they need.
- (4) "Gives" from *didosin*, keeps on giving grace.
- (5) "Humble" from *tapeinois*, lowly. "But

- let the brother of low degree (*tapeinos*).
rejoice in that he is exalted (Jas. 1:9).
- h. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (4:7).
(A) "Submit" from *hupotasso*, to place oneself under.
(B) "Therefore" refers to the grace which God has shown to sinful men. Because he has been so good to us, we ought to submit to him.
(C) "Resist" from *anthistemi*, *anti*. against, and *tasso*, to array or to arrange. The word means to take a stand against the devil.
(D) If we take a stand against the devil, he will flee (*pheugo*). The aorist tense suggests taking a stand and standing there. Cf. 1 Pet. 5:5-9.
- i. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded" (4:8).
(A) "Draw nigh" from *engisate*, from *engizo*, *engus*, near. This is the Greek word which is translated "at hand" (Mt. 21:34; Lk. 18:40).
(B) "He will draw nigh to you." God has never let anyone down.
(C) "Cleanse" from *katharisate*, sometimes used in a ritualistic sense in the Old Testament (Ex. 19:22). Here it is used in a figurative sense. "Sinners" from *hamartoloi*.
(D) "Hands" from *cheiras* when dirty signified moral impurity.
(E) "Purify" from *hagnisate*, make morally pure.

- (F) "Double-minded" from *dipsuchoi*, two-souled
- j. "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness" (4:9).
- (A) James had forgotten or never did know that he was supposed to be positive all the time. This approach sounds very negative to modern ears.
- (B) "Be afflicted" from *talaiporesate*, to be wretched, to endure toils.
- (C) "Mourn" from *penthesate*.
- (1) But are not Christians supposed to rejoice (Phil. 4:4)?
- (2) Why the affliction, mourning and weeping? Cf. 2 Corinthians 7:10.
- (D) "Weep" from *klaio*. Why weep? Peter wept over his denial of the Lord.
- (E) "Laughter" from *gelao*, the opposite of *klaio*.
- (F) "Be turned" from *metatrapeto*, to turn about.
- (G) "Heaviness" from *katepheian, kata*, down and *phae*, eyes.
- k. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up" (4:10).
- (A) "Humble" from *tapeinotheete*, be humbled (passive).
- (B) "Shall exalt" from *huposei, hupsos* (height). Christ humbled himself; God exalted him (Phil. 2:8-9).
2. Condemnation of judging (4:11-12).
- a. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law: but if you judge the law you are not a doer of the law, but a judge" (4:11).

- (A) *Me katalaleite allelon* ("speak not evil of one another") is either a prohibition against forming such a habit or an injunction to stop doing it. He probably was telling them to stop speaking evil of one another.
- (B) James forbids Christians to misuse their tongues, but he really is speaking of a greater problem—having the wrong attitude. Speaking evil of a brother is really a heart problem (Mt. 12:34: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks").
- (C) "Speaks evil" from *katalaleo*, to speak against.
- (D) "Judges" from *krino*, to judge harshly, that is, to judge without knowing all the facts in the case.
- (1) Is all judging prohibited?
 - (2) Living without judging is impossible.
- (E) *Katalalei nomou* means speaking against the law (*nomos*).
- (1) Both the law of Moses and the law of Christ command us to love one another.
 - (2) We must be careful lest we become judges with evil thoughts (Jas. 2:4).
- (F) The type of judging James condemns is censorious judging, based on partial or incorrect information.
- (1) Only God can see and understand all the facts in every case.
 - (2) The tenses of the verbs James used indicate habitual practices of the evils condemned.
- b. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save

and to destroy: who are you that judges another" (4:12)?

- (A) The Revised Versions reads: "One only is the lawgiver and judge." Some manuscripts add the word "judge."
 - (B) God alone has the ability to save (*ho dunamenos sosai*) and to destroy (*apollumi*), first aorist active infinitive.
 - (C) Since God alone has the final prerogative to judge, men must exercise caution in their judgments.
 - (D) The KJV has *heteron*, another. Later manuscripts have *ton pleson*, the neighbor, which seems to be the better attested. The difference does not seem to be important.
- B. Condemnation of presumptuous planning (4:13-17).
- 1. "Go to now, you that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain" (4:13).
 - a. "Go to now" from *age nun*, "Come now" (RSV). Interjectional use of *age*, from *ago*, to lead, to bring.
 - b. "Today or tomorrow" from *semeron kai aurion*.
 - c. "We will go into such a city."
 - (A) The time of going will be in our hands.
 - (B) The city will be of our choosing.
 - d. "Continue" from *poiesomen*, from *poieo*, to do. One cannot avoid seeing the arrogance involved in such planning.
 - e. "Buy and sell" from *emporeusometha*, from *en, poreuomai*, to go in. The verb comes from the noun *emporos*, a merchant or trader.
 - f. "Get gain" from *kerdesomen*, from *kerdos*, gain (Phil. 1:21).
 - 2. "Whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a

vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away" (4:14).

- a. No man knows what will happen tomorrow—not even the modern psychics. We do not even know what will happen the next hour or the next minute.
 - b. James is not condemning planning, but he is urging all of us to take God into our planning.
 - c. "For what is your life?"
 - (A) James is not discussing the nature of human beings, but the nature of our stay on this earth—its transitoriness.
 - (B) Christians and others should consider the length of our lives and the length of eternity.
 - d. James describes our lives as a "vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away."
 - (A) "Vapor" is from *atmis*, mist. Our word "atmosphere."
 - (B) "Appears" from *phainomene*, shines.
 - (C) "Vanishes away" from *aphanizomene*, disappears. James makes a play on words which does appear in most English translations. We appear and then we disappear.
3. "For what you ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that" (4:15).
- a. "Instead of saying, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain," we ought to say, "If the Lord wills."
 - b. Examples of the Christian's attitude in planning:
 - (A) Paul bade them farewell, saying, "I must by all means keep this feast that comes

in Jerusalem: but I will return again to you, if God will. And he sailed for Ephesus" (Acts 18:21).

- (B) "I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them that are puffed up, but the power" (1 Cor. 4:19).
- c. It is a great temptation for many of us to think that what we do and where we go are our decisions and have nothing to do with the Lord's will for our lives.
 - d. James does not condemn planning, but he is urging men to take God into their plans.
 - e. The rich man in one of Christ's parables said, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow my goods" (Lk. 12:18). What did God say to the rich man?
4. "But you rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil" (4:16).
- a. "Rejoicing" from *kauchasthe*, boasting, glorying (2 Cor. 1:12).
 - b. "Boastings" from *alazoneuomai*, to act the empty boaster. The same Greek word is translated "pride of life" (1 John 2:16).
 - c. Boasting of what we are going to do and where we are going is evil (*ponera*). It shows a lack of trust and dependence on God.
5. "Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (4:17).
- a. In view of the shortness of life and the length of eternity, we should do good and not put it off.
 - b. Literally, "the one who knows how to do good."
 - c. This is often called the "sin of omission."

Living For Jesus: Questions For James 4

- 1 What is the source of conflicts and troubles—both in the church and among Nations?
- 2 Why do we not often receive the blessings we ask God to give us?
- 3 Can a person be both a friend of the world and a friend of God at the same time?
- 4 Discuss God's attitude toward the proud and the humble.
- 5 What does it mean to submit to God?
- 6 What does resisting the devil mean?
- 7 If we draw near to God, will He draw near to us?
- 8 Who are the double-minded?
- 9 Paul uses some form of the word "joy" in every chapter of Philippians. What does James urge Christians to mourn and weep?
- 10 If we speak evil of one another, are we not speaking evil of the law?
- 11 Is it evil to plan ahead? If it is not why does James condemn those who say "today or tomorrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain?"
- 12 Should not Christians take God's will into their planning?
- 13 Explain: "Therefore to him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin."

Chapter 5

The Epistle Of James

- A. Judgment coming on the rich (5:1-6).
1. "Go to now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you" (5:1).
 - a. "Go to now" in modern English should read, "Come now." An exclamatory interjection like (James 4:13).
 - b. Neither James or any other New Testament writer demands that rich people give away all their money.
 - c. There is a warning of certain judgment on the rich who have obtained their wealth in immoral ways or who hoard their riches and have no compassion of the needy.
 - d. "Weep" from *klausate*, "burst into weeping" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 57).
 - e. "Howl" from *ololuzontes*, continue to weep. (Onomatopoeic word).
 2. "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments motheaten" (5:2).
 - a. "Corrupted" from *sesepen*, rotted. Cf. Mt. 6:19-24.
 - b. "Garments" from *himatia*, probably highly decorated heirlooms.
 - c. "Motheaten" from *ses*, moth, and *brotos*, eaten.
 3. "Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You heaped treasure together for the last days" (5:3).
 - a. Since gold and silver are considered as one, James uses a singular verb.
 - b. "Gold" from *chrusos* from which we get our word "chrysalis."

- c. "Silver" from *arguros*. In one context, *aphilarguros* is translated "without covetousness" (Heb. 13:5). In 1 Tim. 3:3 the word is translated "not covetous" (KJV) and "no lover of money" (RV).
- d. "Cankered" from *katiao*, to rust down, or to rust through.
- e. James is insisting that money cannot save anyone in the day of judgment.
- f. "Rust" from *ios*, translated "poison" (Jas. 3:8; Rom. 3:13).
 - (A) Gold and silver become tarnished and corroded. That "rust" will be a witness against the rich in the judgment.
 - (B) A man's money can witness against his obtaining it in immoral ways or his failure to use it to the glory of God. It is not wrong to have money, but it is a tremendous responsibility.
- g. "Shall eat your flesh as it were fire."
 - (A) This is a highly figurative expression indicating that hoarding money will destroy those who do it. Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Silas Marner" is a good example.
 - (B) As metals rust and decay, so do they who hoard money.
 - (C) As fire destroys bodies, so shall abusing money and coveting it.
 - (D) "Flesh" from *sarkas* (plural) and probably indicates all parts of the body.
- e. "You have heaped together for the last days."
 - (A) "Have heaped treasure" from *ethesaurisate*, laid up, treasured up. Our English word "thesaurus" comes from this Greek word.

(B) Examples of the use of the Greek *thesaurizo*.

(1) "Lay not up for yourselves treasures (*me thesaurizete humin thesaurous*) upon this earth, where moth and rust corrupts, and where thieves break through and steal" (Mt. 6:19).

(2) "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store (*tethesaurismenoi*), reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:7).

(C) "The last days" in this text probably means the final judgment.

4. "Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" (5:4).

a. "Behold" from *idou*, lo, look at.

b. "Hire" from *misthos*, wages, reward. "The laborer is worthy of his hire" (1 Tim. 5:18).

c. "Laborers" from *ergaton*, probably agricultural workers.

d. "Have reaped down" from *amesanton*, harvested, gathered.

e. "Kept back by fraud" from *aphusterememos*, to fail of, to withdraw.

(A) The Old Testament speaks explicitly of cheating a person in a business deal.

(1) "You shall not defraud your neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with you all night until the morning" (Lev. 19:13).

(2) Other passages: Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5.

- (B) The relationship of employer and of employee is very vital to the welfare of any society.
- (C) What if both employer and employee both followed the golden rule? What difference would it make?
- f. "Cries" from *krazei*, to cry out, to yell for vengeance.
- (A) Does God hear that cry?
- (B) Did he hear the cry of the Israelites in Egypt?
- g. God always hears the cries of the oppressed and downtrodden. Can we afford to do less?
- h. "Lord of sabaoth" means Lord of hosts, the omnipotent one, the all powerful God.
5. "You have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; you have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter" (5:5).
- a. "You have lived in pleasure and been wanton."
- (A) "You have lived delicately" (RV).
- (B) "You have lived in luxury" (RSV).
- (C) "Lived in pleasure" from *etruphesate*, luxurious living, to lead a soft life.
- (D) "Been wanton" from *espatalesate*, living voluptuously, "taken your pleasure" (RV).
- b. "You have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter."
- (A) "Nourished" from *ethrepsate* (*trepho*) means to feed, to fatten.
- (B) They were fattening themselves for the day of slaughter. Animals are given all the food they can eat in view of their own slaughter. These rich men were like the cattle being fattened for slaughter and seemed not to realize it.

6. "You have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you" (5:6).
 - a. "Condemned" from *katadikazo*. The rich controlled the courts of the land. What chance has a poor man in a court of law?
 - b. Some have interpreted "the just" to refer to Christ, but that does not seem to fit the context. Christ certainly fits the picture of someone's killing the just, but I doubt James had Jesus in mind.
 - c. Honest men were killed either directly or indirectly by these rich men.
 - d. The just did not resist because they had no standing in the courts. "Resist" comes from the Greek *antitasso*, to array or to arrange against.
- B. Patience commanded (5:7-11).
 1. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain" (5:7).
 - a. "Patient" if from *makrothumia*, *makros*, long, *thumos*, mind or spirit. The idea is not losing heart, not giving up.
 - (A) James has already exhorted those early Christians to remain under, to endure (*hupomeno*). He now encourages them to be steadfast—not to lose heart (*markothumia*).
 - (B) The oppressed in every age needs that kind of encouragement.
 - b. Many people have become disheartened since the Lord has delayed his coming. We must remain faithful and let the Lord decide the time of his coming.
 - c. "Coming" from *parousia* and refers to our

- Lord's coming at the end of the age. The word means one who has come and remains.
- It was used in Bible times of a king who comes and stays with his people.
- d. "Husbandman" from *georgos*, *ge*, ground, and *ergos*, worker. The word literally means a worker of the ground and was used of farmers and vineyard keepers.
 - e. "Waits for" from *ekdechetai*, expectantly waiting. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry" (Acts 17:16).
 - f. "Precious" from *timion*, honor, price, dear. Galael was "had in reputation (*timios*) among all the people" (Acts 5:34).
 - g. "Has long patience for it" from *makrothumia*, steadfastness. Farmers have to be among the most patient people on earth. They wait patiently and expectantly for the harvest. Christians likewise are told to be patient for our Lord's coming.
2. "Be also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws near" (5:8).
 - a. "Patient" from *makrothumia*, steadfastness. As the farmer must be patient in waiting for his crops to mature, so we must be patient for our Lord's return.
 - b. "Stablish" from *sterizo*, to make stable, establish.
 - (A) Christ used the same word when he said to Peter, "I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen (*sterison*) your brethren" (Lk. 22:32).
 - (B) Stability is certainly one of the most urgently needed qualities of our era.

- c. "The coming of the Lord draws near."
 (A) "Coming" from *parousia*, literally "presence."
 (B) "At hand" from *engus*, drawing near. "The return of Christ is so real, so certain, so sure of fulfillment, that he is always regarded as near at hand" (Woods, p. 277).
3. "Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest you be condemned: behold, the judge stands before the door" (5:9).
 a. "Grudge" from *stenazete*, to groan. The literal meaning is "stop groaning."
 (A) "Do it with joy, and not with grief (literally, not groaning)," (Heb. 13:17). "Murmur" (RV).
 (B) "Condemned" from *katarithete*, negative purpose. Cf. 4:12; 5:12.
- b. Christ is standing before the door (*thuron*) ready to judge. This does not mean that men cannot judge in any area, but it does suggest the care with which we judge. The fact that Jesus Christ is the judge is offered as proof of his deity (John 5:22).
4. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (5:10).
 a. "Prophets" from *prophetas*, God's spokesmen. The prophet was primarily a forth-teller—not a foreteller. There are people who have something to say and those who have to say something. The prophets had something to say and had to say it.
 b. "Have spoken" from *elalesan*, aorist "spoke."
 (A) "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall

- command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die" (Dt. 18:18-20).
- (B) "In the name of the Lord" means by the authority of the Lord. How did the prophets authenticate their messages?
- (C) All the prophets of God claimed to speak the very words of God. Did they? How could their words be other than inerrant?
- c. "Example" is from *hupodeigma*, literally to show under.
- (A) "Model, pattern, example" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 851).
- (B) "I have given you an example (*hupodeigma*), that you should do as I have done unto you" (John 13:15).
- d. "Suffering affliction" from *kakopathesias*, suffering evils. Guy N. Woods says that is "suffering from without" (Woods, p. 281).
5. "Behold, we count them happy which endure. You have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (5:11).
- a. "Happy" from *makarizomen*, call them blessed or fortunate. "Happy" is not a very good translation of the Greek. The Greek word is used fifty-eight times in the New Testament and is translated "happy" only six times (John 13:17; Acts 26:2; Rom. 14:22; 1 Cor. 7:40; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14). In all of these

- cases, in my judgment, the word would have been better translated “blessed” or “fortunate.”
- b. “Endure” from *hupomeno*, to hold out to the end, to remain under.
 - c. “The patience of Job.” What kind of “patience” did Job exhibit?
 - (A) Job is an excellent example of endurance (*hupomone*), but he was not a good example of *makrothumia*—steadfastness. Job continually complained but refused to curse God and die (Job 1:21; 2:10; 13:15; 16:19; 19:25ff).
 - (B) “He had become a stock illustration of loyal endurance” (Robertson, volume 6, p. 63).
 - (C) Ezek. 14:14: “Noah, Daniel and Job.”
 - d. “Pitiful” from *polusplangchnos*, “bowels of mercy” (Col. 3:12). This word is most often translated “compassion.”
 - e. “Tender mercy” from *oikteriro*, to have pity, to be very kind. “The Lord is compassionate and merciful” (RSV).
6. “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; let you fall into condemnation” (5:12).
 - a. “Above all things” points out the importance of the injunction to follow. This admonition seems not to have any connection to what precedes.
 - b. “Swear not” from *me omneute*, do not keep on swearing.
 - (A) This command reflects the Lord’s statements: “Swear not at all” (Mt. 5:34-37).
 - (B) The scriptures forbid various oaths, profanity, and such like.

- c. Some apparently were reluctant to use the Lord's name in oaths, but they technically avoided such by swearing by heaven or by the earth or by other entities.
 - d. Does God forbid all oath taking in courts by law? "Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"
 - e. "Let your yea be yea" and no more. You do not have to punctuate your words with oaths.
 - f. This verse teaches Christians the importance of their words.
- C. Illness and the efficacy of prayer (5:13-18).
1. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (5:13).
 - a. "Afflicted" from *kakopathei*, suffering. This word is broad enough to include inward suffering as well as outward forms. *Kakopatheo* (*kakos*, evil, *pathos*, suffering) means to suffer hardship.
 - b. "Pray" from *proseuchestho*, keep on praying.
 - (A) What will be changed by prayer?
 - (B) Is prayer merely a spiritual exercise or does it really change things?
 - c. "Merry" from *euthumeo*, "friendly, joyful, pleasant, agreeable" (Woods, p. 297).
 - d. "Sing" from *psallo*, to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song (Thayer). "Sing psalms" in the word *psalleto*, sing praises or hymns.
 2. "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (5:14).
 - a. "Sick" from *asthenei*, weak, without strength. Does this word necessarily mean physical ailments?

- b. "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded (fainthearted), support the weak (*asthenon*), be patient toward all men" (1 Thess. 5:14).
- c. "Let him call (at once) for the elders of the church" (aorist middle imperative).
- (A) "Elders" from *presbuteros*, plurality of elders or bishops (Acts 14:23; 15:2; 16:4; 21:18; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).
- (B) "Church" from *ekklesias*, not *sunagogen* as in James 2:2. The local church had elders very early, maybe as early as 48 or 49.
- d. The elders were to pray over the weak or sick, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
- (A) The prayers of the elders were to be on behalf of the sick. Prayer has great power whether or not we know how God operates in prayer.
- (B) Pat Boone argues that "prayer is either supernatural or psychological. There can be no middle ground" (**Dr. Balaam's Talking Mule**, p. 119).
- (1) Is there really no middle ground? May not God operate providentially?
- (2) Christ taught his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Mt. 6:11). Does our bread come supernaturally or psychologically?
- (C) What is the significance of "anointing with oil?"
- (1) Anointing with oil was done symbolically in consecrating prophets, priests, and kings (1 Sam. 19:1, 9).
- (2) Its medicinal use is seen in Luke 10:34, pouring oil in wounds.

- (3) Guy N. Woods thinks the anointing with oil was symbolic (pp. 301-302). A. T. Robertson thinks it was done for physical healing (volume 6, p. 65).
- (D) "In the name of the Lord," that is, by his authority and in his honor.
3. "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (5:15).
- a. "Prayer of faith" means prayer characterized by faith.
- b. "Save" from *sosei*, heal, save. "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole" (Mt. 9:21).
- c. "And the Lord shall raise him up."
- (A) This verse has been used to justify the Roman Catholic doctrine of Extreme Unction. The purpose of praying for the sick and anointing him with oil was to make the sick man get well.
- (B) "Raise up" from *egeiro*. "Precious promise, but not for a professional 'faith-healer' who scoffs at medicine and makes merchandise of prayer" (A. T. Robertson, volume 6, p. 65).
- d. "If he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."
- (A) There is no implication that the sickness resulted from some sin, although that is a distinct possibility.
- (B) Will his sins be forgiven without repentance on the part of the sick man? Are sins ever forgiven without repentance?
4. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (5:16).

- a. "Confess" from *exomologeō*, present middle, keep on confessing your sins to one another and keep on praying for one another.
- (A) The Roman Catholic Church attempts to sustain Auricular Confession from this verse. "Confess to one another," not to the priest.
- (B) Our confession is to be as public as our sin.
- b. "Pray one for another."
- (A) Our prayers are to be both public and private.
- (B) Take note of Paul's prayers for the saints (Phil. 1:3; 2 Thess. 3:1, etc.).
- c. "That you may be healed."
- (A) "Healed" is from *iaomai* and is always translated in the KJV either "healed" or "made whole." "By whose stripes you were healed" (1 Pet. 2:24). The Greek word for "doctor" is *iatros*. "Physician, heal thyself" (Lk. 4:23).
- (B) The sick of verses 14-15 were promised healing and forgiveness. Did the healing always occur?
- d. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." How much?
- (A) "Effectual fervent" from *deesis energoumene*, literally supplication in its working.
- (1) "The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects" (RSV).
- (2) Who is a righteous man? Are others permitted to pray? Does it do any good when they do?
- (B) How much does the prayer of a righteous man avail?
- "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for
me night and day.

For what are men better than sheep or goats that
nourish a blind life without the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands or prayers
both for themselves and those who call
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way bound
by gold chains about the feet of God?

(Alfred Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King, the
Passing of Arthur*).

(C) "Avails much" from *polu ischuei*, has great
force.

5. "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as
we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might
not rain: and it rained not on the earth for the
space of three years and six months" (5:17).

a. Elijah serves an excellent example of what
the prayer of a righteous man avails.

b. "Subject to like passions" from *homoioopathes*,
of like feelings with us.

(A) "Elijah was man of like nature with
ourselves" (RSV).

(B) "Elijah was a man just like us" (NIV).

(C) If Elijah could receive so much in answer
to prayer, why not all righteous men
and women?

c. "He earnestly prayed that it might not rain."

(A) "Earnestly prayed" from *prosecuche
proseuxato*, literally, "prayed with prayer."

(1) The Greeks often used the same word
two times in order to intensify the
meaning.

(2) *Phugein phugei*, to flee with all speed.

(B) Elijah prayed for it not to rain.

(1) Elijah's prayer was not a selfish
prayer (Jas. 4:3: "That you may con-
sume it on your own lusts.")

- (2) Elijah's concern was God's will and God's people. "I have been jealous for the Lord God of hosts" (1 Kings 19:10).
- (C) "It rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months."
- (1) Elijah's prayer was answered.
- (2) The Old Testament account does not specify the time involved, but both Jesus and James do. "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land" (Lk. 4:25).
- d. "And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (5:18).
- (A) The account of this incident is in 1 Kings 18:41-45.
- (B) Elijah's prayer was answered again.
- (C) "Elijah was a mere man; God answered his prayer; he will, therefore, answer ours as well" (Woods, p. 310).
- e. "Brought forth" from *eblastesen* (*blastano*) to sprout.
- D. Concluding admonitions (5:19-20).
1. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him" (5:19).
- a. Is it possible for one to err from the truth? If not, why does James waste our time with this admonition?
- b. "Do err" from *planethe*, go astray, wander. Our English word "planet" comes from this Greek word.
- (A) "If" is condition of the third class, assumed as true. This is not just a

hypothetical case. "It was easy then, and is now, to be led astray from Christ, who is the truth" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 67).

(B) Guy N. Woods has a lengthy quotation from Sam Morris on the question, "Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?" Morris replies, "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul" (p. 311).

(C) Robert Shank: **Elect in the Son and Life in the Son.**

c. "Convert" from *epistrepse* (*epistrepho*, to turn).

(A) Christians are to bring him back, to turn him around.

(B) How does one go about converting others?

(1) What are the means?

(2) What are the reasons for converting a brother?

2. "Let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (5:20).

a. "Any of you" is the "him" of this verse. Every Christian should be concerned about the welfare of his fellow Christians.

b. "Know" from *ginosketo*, "let him keep on knowing."

c. "Converts" is the same as in verse 19. "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).

d. How is it possible to determine when a brother is in error?

e. "Error" from *plane*, sin induced by deception.

- f. A soul will be saved from spiritual death.
- (A) How tremendously important this work is.
 - (B) Are we really concerned about the lost sheep?
- g. "Shall hide a multitude of sins."
- (A) "Hide" from *kalupsei*, cover.
 - (B) "Multitude" from *plethos*, our word "plethora."
 - (C) Whose sins will be covered—the one who leads or the one who is led?

Living For Jesus: Questions For James 5

- 1 Does the Bible condemn riches as such?
- 2 Why does James speak so harshly of the rich?
- 3 James says the gold and silver of the men who trust in riches are "cankered." How can gold and silver canker?
- 4 What does God think of employers who withhold the just pay of their laborers?
- 5 What is the meaning of the "Lord of sabaoth?"
- 6 So many people in our generation seem to be impatient about the Lord's second coming. What illustration does James use to urge Christians to be patient?
- 7 James urges Christians not to grudge? What does he mean by the word "grudge?"
- 8 Discuss the great suffering the great prophets of God experienced.
- 9 Who or what is a prophet?
- 10 In what way was Job "patient?"
- 11 Are Christians always forbidden to swear? Explain.
- 12 Is the healing James discusses miraculous?
- 13 Discuss: "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."
- 14 Was the prayer of Elijah answered miraculously?
- 15 Is it a serious matter if a Christian errs from the truth?
- 16 If it is not serious, why bother to convert an erring brother?

1 Peter

Introduction

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. Authorship.

1. Objections to Petrine authorship. Donald Guthrie lists three major objections.

a. Linguistic and stylistic objections.

(A) How could a Galilean fisherman use such excellent Greek?

(1) "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

(a) Jack Lewis suggested that Silas may have aided Peter (1 Pet. 5:12). There is no justification for that conclusion.

(b) "Unlearned" from *agrammatoi*, unlettered men, not college educated. They had not been to the Jewish training schools like those of Hillel and Shammai.

(c) "Ignorant" from *idiotai* does not mean the same as it did in ancient times. A modern synonym would be "layman" as contrasted with someone who is skilled in some area.

(d) These words do not suggest that Peter and John were totally uneducated.

- (2) We do not know how Peter had learned so much about the Greek language. We are operating on the basis of silence. That is always dangerous (Dt. 29:29).
 - (3) Peter's use of the Septuagint (LXX) has led some to conclude that a Jew would not have used that version.
 - (a) Peter was addressing a Gentile audience, as we shall see in our discussion of the text.
 - (b) Peter would have known of the use of the LXX among Hellenistic Jews.
- (B) Historical objections.
- (1) Peter's letter has much to say about persecution. What persecution of the early church does this letter reflect?
 - (a) 1 Peter resembles Pliny's letter to the Emperor Trajan.
 - (b) There are differences, however, between the two letters. Pliny mentions persecution, but does not suggest it was universal. Peter knows that Christian everywhere can expect this kind of persecution.
 - (c) Dr. Guthrie concludes that the specific persecution cannot be identified. It could come from Jews, from the rich and the powerful—not necessarily from the Roman government.
 - (2) One objection centers on Peter's infringing on Paul's territory. This cannot be considered a serious objection. Paul may have been dead by this

time. Besides, there is no indication that the apostles had or desired an exclusive territory. The whole world was their missionary field.

(C) Theological objections.

(1) Some critics insist that the book has too much in common with Paul's writings.

(a) Compare 1 Peter 2:6 with Romans 9:32-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7 with Ephesians 5:22-28.

(b) Brother Jack Lewis says this should not be surprising if Silas aided Peter in writing.

(c) A much simpler explanation: They both served the same Lord and were inspired by the same Holy Spirit.

(d) C. H. Dodd and others believe there was an earlier catechism (*kerugma*) which was the basis of what both Paul and Peter preached. Both could have it. This is nothing but idle speculation.

(2) Why must liberal scholars constantly seek to show some kind of collusion between biblical authors?

2. The case for Petrine authorship.

a. Internal claims.

(A) Peter, an apostle, claims to have written the epistle (1 Pet. 1:1).

(B) The author claims to have been "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Pet. 5:1).

(C) He knows well the behavior of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21-25). This is not a conclusive argument.

- (D) There are similarities between 1 Peter and Peter's speeches in Acts.
 - (1) According to both records, Jesus Christ was crucified on a "tree" (1 Pet. 2:24; Acts 5:30).
 - (2) Both include the suffering servant concept (1 Pet. 2:21-25; Acts 3:19; 4:11; 10:34).
 - (E) Words of Christ are woven into the writings (1 Pet. 1:10-12; 4:14; 5:5). Again, this is not very conclusive.
 - (F) Peter's connections with Mark's family (1 Pet. 5:13; Acts 12:12).
- b. External claims.
- (A) Papias said that Peter's interpreter was Mark.
 - (B) Peter's first letter is attested by his second letter. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" (2 Pet. 3:1).
 - (C) There were no clear citations in the early days.
 - (D) Eusebius says that Papias (125 A.D.) used excerpts from 1 Peter.
 - (E) Irenaeus refers specifically to 1 Peter (180 A.D.). From that time on the attestation is excellent.
 - (F) Some of the heretics—Basilides and Theodotion—used 1 Peter. Marcion, another heretic, did not make use of 1 Peter, but he had great bias toward anything which was Jewish.
 - (G) Origen mentioned this letter and it is never disputed after that.

3. Date.

- a. It is generally dated before 64 or 65, since

- this was generally thought to the date of Peter's death.
- b. The letter seems to indicate an atmosphere of extreme persecution.
 - (A) "The Gentiles...speak against you as evil doers" (1 Pet. 2:12).
 - (B) "For what glory is it, if, when you be buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (1 Pet. 2:20)?
 - (C) Other examples: 1 Pet. 3:16-17; 4:14, 16.
 - c. When would a situation like the one Peter describes exist in the history of the early church?
 - (A) Nero (c. 64)?
 - (B) Domitian's persecution (95 A.D.)? We really do not know much about this period. The book of Revelation seems to reflect this period of persecution.
 - (C) Trajan (110 A.D.)? Pliny wrote to Trajan about what could be done about Christians.
 - (D) The last two – Domitian and Trajan – were too late for the book of 1 Peter.
 - (E) There is no way to know for sure, but the persecution probably came from the Jews and from rich and powerful men.
 4. What is known about the apostle Peter after the day of Pentecost?
 - a. Solomon's porch (Acts 3).
 - b. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5).
 - c. Joppa and Dorcas (Acts 10).
 - d. Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11).
 - e. Peter's imprisonment and release (Acts 12).
 - f. The questions about circumcision and the law (Acts 15).
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- g. Galatians 2:14ff. records a difference between Paul and Peter.
 - h. Church historians think the apostle Peter was martyred, but there is no hard and fast evidence that this happened.
5. Destination of the letter.
- a. "To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1 Pet. 1:1).
 - (A) The places mentioned in verse one were all geographical areas as well as Roman provinces.
 - (B) The word "scattered" is from the Greek *diasporas*, meaning dispersion. James used the expression: "Twelve tribes in the dispersion (or scattered abroad)" (Jas. 1:1).
 - (C) The language Peter uses in his epistle would indicate that the recipients of his letter were not Jews.
 - (1) "Redeemed...from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1 Pet. 1:18).
 - (2) "The former lusts in your ignorance" (1 Pet. 1:14).
 - (3) "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2:10).
 - (4) "For the time past of your life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. 4:3).
 - b. Peter uses the expression: "She who is in Babylon" (1 Pet. 5:13).

- (A) Babylon was not utterly destroyed by the Persians (Daniel).
- (B) It was occupied during the early years of the Christian era.
- (C) "Babylon" could be taken literally (Hort, Meyer, Calvin, and others).
- (D) There is strong tradition against this position. Jack Lewis argues that there is no definite proof that Rome was ever called "Babylon" until after the book of Revelation was written.
- (E) Who is the "she" of this passage?
 - (1) The church personified?
 - (2) Some prominent woman in the church?
 - (3) The apostle Peter's wife?

Chapter 1

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

CHAPTER 1

A. Salutation (1:1-2).

1. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1:1).

a. Peter from *petros*, a stone or a rock. The Aramic is Cephas. Both words means the same.

b. "Strangers" from *parapidemois* and means sojourners, pilgrims (1 Pet. 2:11). The word is composed of three Greek words: *para*, beside, *epi*, upon and *deemos*, a strange people. The literal meaning is to dwell alongside those of a strange land.

c. "Scattered" from *diasporas* and should read "sojourners of the dispersion."

(A) In this context, the word seems to refer to Christians who are strangers on this earth. "This world is not my home. I am just passing through." The word seems to have a spiritual meaning.

(B) Pontus, Galatia, Cappodocia, Asia and Bithynia were predominantly Gentile and were Roman provinces.

2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1:2).

a. "Elect" from the Greek *eklektois*, the selected or chosen.

(A) The question is not: Are we the elect?

But how are we elected? (Robert Shank: **Elect in the Son**).

- (B) "According as he has chosen (elected) us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).
- b. "Foreknowledge" from *prognosin* (our word "prognosis").
 - (A) The word means previous determination purpose, to know beforehand.
 - (B) Was the determination of who would be saved conditional or unconditional?
- c. "Sanctification" comes from *hagiasmo*, separation, set apart.
 - (A) This is the same basic word which is translated "holy."
 - (B) How does the spirit sanctify (John 17:17)?
- d. "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."
 - (A) "Unto" (*eis*) indicates the purpose for the plan which God has given: "unto obedience."
 - (B) "The sprinkling" (*rantismos*) of the blood of Jesus Christ refers to the practice under the old covenant (Ex. 24:8).
 - (C) Objections to the biblical doctrine of atonement. Leslie Weatherhead. **The Christian Agnostic**. Nashville: Abingdon, 1966.
 - (1) "Frankly it is nonsense to say, 'Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins'" (p. 114).
 - (2) "The writer of the book of Revelation, influenced by the mystery religious, goes further still from modern western thought when he writes of the Christians in heaven who have 'washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.'

“Apart from the slip, which any schoolmaster would correct in a boy’s essay, that robes washed in blood would be red not white, and overlooking what is to us the revolting horror of the whole idea, we must note that the picture is taken direct from the mystery religions” (p. 117).

(3) “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

(A) “Grace” from *charis* and peace from *eirene*. This greeting is very similar to ones we find in Paul’s epistles.

(B) “Be multiplied” is from *plethuntheie*, an old verb for fulness. The same word is used in 2 Peter 1:2 and Jude 2 and no where else in the New Testament.

B. The great salvation (1:3-12).

1. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1:3).

a. “Blessed” from *eulogetos* from which we get our words “eulogy” and “eulogize.” Paul used the same word in speaking of the spiritual blessings which Christians enjoy in Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed (*eulogesas*) us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

b. Please take note of the emphasis on “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Feminists and other radicals in our society take offense at the use of the word “Father,”

- but it was generally Christ's way of referring to God.
- c. "Abundant mercy" from *polu eleos*, great mercy.
 - d. "Has begotten again" from *anagennesas*, first aorist, "begot again."
 - (A) Guy N. Woods thinks that the emphasis is on "again" and refers to the new hope the apostles entertained after Christ's resurrection. "The reference here is, therefore, to the re-establishment of the faith of the disciples by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead" (p. 25).
 - (B) Peter used the same word in verse 23 and applies it to all Christians.
 - e. "Lively hope" from *elipda zosan*, living hope.
 - (A) Hope involves both desire and expectation.
 - (B) How important is hope in any person's life? Cf. Eph. 2:12; Heb. 6:19).
 - f. "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."
 - (A) The resurrection of Christ guarantees that hope which Christians enjoy.
 - (B) "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).
 - (C) Christian evidences must be based primarily on Christ's resurrection.
2. "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1:4).
 - a. Notice the connection between this verse and the preceding one: "We are begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible."
 - b. The inheritance is incorruptible and undefiled.
 - (A) "Inheritance" from *kleronomian*, the pro-

- erty we receive by inheritance (*kleronomos*, heir).
- (B) "Incorruptible" from *aphtharton*, imperishable, undying, immortal.
- (C) "Undeified" from *amianton*, without defect or flaw. "Pure and undeified (*amiantos*) religion" (Jas. 1:27). The bed "undeified" (Heb. 13:4).
- c. "And that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you."
- (A) "Fades not away" from *amaranton*, unfading. The fading of flowers illustrates what Peter was discussing.
- (B) "Reserved" from *tereo*, to keep in watchful custody.
- (1) It is life which is reserved in heaven and is not available in this life.
- (2) Is our place in heaven reserved conditionally or unconditionally? If it is reserved unconditionally, we can stop reading the Bible and going to service.
- (C) Christ has gone to prepare a place for us and will come again (John 14:1-6).
3. "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1:5).
- a. "Are kept" from *phouroumenous*, being kept or guarded.
- (A) *Phoureo* means to protect with a garrison, or military guard (Woods, p. 27).
- (B) "And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ" (Phil. 4:7).
- b. "Power" from *dunamis*. Does this verse mean that we are kept whether or not we want to be kept? Do our desires and behavior

- have any bearing on whether or not we are kept?
4. "Through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - a. God keeps us "through faith."
 - (A) Could the term *pisteos* be rendered "faithfulness."
 - (B) If we are reserved or preserved unconditionally, then we are not kept through faith.
 - b. *Eis soterian*, unto salvation. This is eternal salvation.
 - c. "Ready" from *hetoimen*. God has prepared a place for the soul which is ready in God's own good time.
 - d. "Revealed" from *apokalupsthenai*, to be uncovered, unveiled.
 - e. "The last time" from *eschato*, last things.
 5. "Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (1:6).
 - a. *En ho* in which cannot refer to the salvation which is feminine gender. It can refer to the whole of the blessings which Peter listed: inheritance, sonship, etc.
 - b. "Greatly rejoice" from *agalliasthe*, rejoice exceedingly, exalt. "Rejoice (*chairete*) and be exceedingly glad (*agalliasthe*)" (Mt. 5:12).
 - c. "Though now for a season, now for a little while (*aligon arti*).
 - d. *Ei deon estin*, if it is necessary (*dei*).
 - e. *Lupethentes*, having been put to grief.
 - f. *Poikilos*, manifold, varied. *Polupoikilos*, many-splendored, variegated (Eph. 3:10-11).
 - g. "Temptations" from *peirasmois*, trials. Cf. James 1.
 6. "That the trial of your faith, being much more

precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1:7).

a. "That the trial of your faith."

(A) "That" from *hina*, purpose.

(B) "Trial" from *dokimion*, proving, examining, approving.

(1) The word involves proving or trying with a view either to approving or disapproving.

(2) "Knowing that the proving of your faith works out endurance" (Jas. 1:3).

(3) Oddly enough, Dr. A. T. Robertson, one of the world's greatest Greek scholars, thinks that Peter borrowed the phrase from James.

(4) Paul uses the word seventeen times. Did he borrow it from James?

(5) The word had a metallurgical connotation.

b. "Being much more precious than gold which perishes."

(A) When gold goes through the purifying process, it is much more valuable.

(B) We become stronger and more effective servants when we go through the purifying process.

(C) Outward circumstances cannot destroy faith. Only we can lose and destroy our own faith.

c. "Though it be tried with fire."

(A) The word "tried" is from *dokimazo*, and means being proved. This is the common word in testing metals. "Faith stands the test of fire better than gold, but even gold

- is refined by fire" (A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures*, volume 6, p. 84).
- (B) F. B. Meyer's commentary on 1 Peter is called **Tried by Fire** (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950).
- d. "Might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."
- (A) There is the purpose behind our trials: "That our faith might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."
- (B) "Be found" from *heurethe*, from we our out word "heuristic," a special insight into a problem.
- (C) "Praise" (*epainon*), *timen* (worth) and glory (*doxas*). This may come from both God and man.
- (D) "Appearing" from *apokalupsei*, the word which is usually translated "revelation." This refers to the final appearance or revelation of Jesus Christ. Cf. verse 5.
6. "Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, through now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1:8).
- a. "Whom having not seen, you love."
- (A) We have never seen Christ, but we have an abundance of evidence to tell us who he is and what he has done for our salvation.
- (B) Our faith is not standing on feelings or on human longings. It is founded on fact.
- (C) "You love" from *agapate*, continue to love.
- (1) Could the apostle Peter have these words in mind: "Jesus says to him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed: blessed are they

that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29)?

- (2) How do men come to love Jesus Christ?
Can such love be sure and stedfast?

b. "In whom, though now you see him not, yet believing."

(A) Is there enough hard evidence about the appearance and teaching of Christ that we can come to know, to trust, even without seeing?

(B) Some of our preachers are having doubts about the certainty of knowing whether or not New Testament Christianity is true or if we can know it is true. The Bible writers never expressed such doubts (John 8:32; 2 Tim. 1:12).

c. "You rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of joy."

(A) In spite of the trials, temptations and heartaches, Christians are able to rejoice (*agalliasthē*: exult) with joy (*chara*).

(B) Peter describes the joy of Christians as being "unspeakable" (*anekaleto*), unutterable. How can a mere mortal speak of such wondrous gifts?

(C) "Full of glory" from *dedozasmene*, glorified joy.

7. "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1:9).

a. "Receiving" from *komizo*, to receive back, to get what is promised.

b. "End" from *telos*, conclusion, culmination, purpose, design. At the judgment, we shall receive all that God has promised his faithful children.

c. "Even the salvation of your souls."

(A) Modernists, liberals and other enemies

of the Lord's church have much to say about the other—worldliness of New Testament Christianity.

(B) But promises of the gospel give us hope and stability and the basis for serving our fellowmen.

8. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (1:10).
 - a. Salvation through Jesus Christ was the subject of many Old Testament prophecies. It was not the fulfillment of some contingency plan which was put in place because God's original plan had failed. It was in the mind of God from eternity (Eph. 3:10-11).
 - b. "Inquired" from *exezetesan*, to seek out, to scrutinize closely.
 - c. "Searched diligently" from *exeraunao*, "to trace out in detail, to explore, as one carefully sifts ore to find the precious metal" (Woods, p. 32).
 - (A) Did not these men understand their own writings? Did they just write out of their own experiences?
 - (B) "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21).
 - d. "Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you."
 - (A) "Prophesied" from *propheteusantes*, speaking for God. How could these men have spoken otherwise?
 - (B) Concerning the grace for you, that is, intended for you.
9. "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" (1:11).

- a. "Searching" from *eraunontes*. They made extensive investigation.
 - b. They wanted to know what (*tina*) or "what manner of time." They could read their own words, but they could not understand the full import of their words nor the time of their fulfillment.
 - c. How could the "Spirit of Christ" be in them? What does that imply? Was Christ the giver of the Old Testament, too?
 - d. "Signify" from *edelou*, from *deloo*, to make plain. Imperfect active: "did keep on pointing to."
 - e. "Testified before hand" from *promarturomenon*, bore witness beforehand. This is predictive prophecy regarding Jesus Christ.
 - f. "Sufferings" from *pathemata*, literally, "sufferings for (destined for) Christ."
 - (A) Isaiah 53.
 - (B) "But those things, which God before had shown by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled" (Acts 3:18).
 - (C) "The glory that should follow." The Lord suffered and then was glorified in his resurrection and ascension. Cf. Philipians 2:5-11.
10. "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us did they minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit send down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1:12).
- a. Many of the great truths of Christ's coming were revealed unto the prophets, but they did not fully comprehend.

- b. "Was revealed" from *apekaluphthe*, unveiled, uncovered. The prophets were allowed a glimpse of what would occur when Jesus Christ would come into the world. "Here is revelation about the revelation already received, revelation after research" (Robertson, **Word Studies**, volume 6, p. 86).
- c. The revelation which the prophets received was not ultimately intended for them; it was designed for those of us who live in the Christian era.
- (A) The prophets wanted to know the fulfillment of their prophetic writings; so did the angels. But the full knowledge was reserved for us.
- (B) "Did minister" from *diekonoun*, serving. This is one form of the word translated "deacon."
- d. "Reported" from *anengele*, announced, bring back tidings.
- e. "Have preached the gospel" from *euangelisamenon*, announced glad tidings, "the gospelizers." Aorist middle participle of *euangelizo*, to preach the gospel.
- f. "By the Holy Spirit" – not with the Holy Spirit.
- g. "Sent" from *apostalenti*, sent forth from heaven. The word "apostle" comes from this same Greek word.
- h. "Which things the angels desire to look into."
- (A) Literally, "into which."
- (B) The angels wanted to know what God had in store for the Christian era. Even heavenly beings were interested in what God would provide for us.
- (C) "Desire" from *epithumousin*, long for, eagerly desire.

- (D) "To look into" from *parakupsai*, to peer intently into, to stoop down in order to look (Jas. 1:25).
- C. Soberness and holiness commanded (1:13-21).
1. "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" (1:13).
 - a. "Wherefore," that is, because of the grace that has been made known to men.
 - b. "Gird up" from *anazosamenoï*, girding up. "Vivid metaphor for the habit of the Orientals, who quickly gathered up their robes with a girdle when in a hurry or starting on a journey" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 87).
 - c. "Loins" from *osphuas*, that part of the body where the girdle is worn.
 - d. "Mind" from *dianoias*, understanding. Does the mind have "loins?"
 - e. "Sober" from *nephontes*, *nepho* (drunk), but used metaphorically of self-control.
 - f. "Hope to the end," perfectly hope (*teleios elipsate*). "Set your hope fully" (RSV).
 - g. The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
 - (A) A continual reaching for grace.
 - (B) "Be brought" from *pheromenen*, being brought. *Phero* means to bring, or to carry (2 Pet. 1:21).
 - h. "Revelation of Jesus Christ" from *apokalupsei*, revelation. This refers to the final coming of Christ.
 2. "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance" (1:14).
 - a. "Obedient children," that is, children characterized by obedience. If God's children

- did not continue to obey, would that in any way affect their eternal salvation?
- b. "Fashioning" from *suschematizomenoi*, conformed. Outward pattern in contrast to inward change (*metamorphoo*: Rom. 12:2).
 - c. "Former lusts" from *tais proteron epithumiais*, that is, the lusts which had characterized them before they became Christians. This might signify that they were Gentiles. Cf. Eph. 4:17ff.
 - d. *Agnōia*. Ignorance which was found among the Gentiles before they obeyed the gospel.
3. "But as he which has called you is holy, so be holy in all manner of conversation" (1:15).
 - a. God is the one who has called us (*kalesanta*). He is the standard of holiness. Since God is holy, he wants us to be holy. He has given us the means by which we can become holy.
 - b. *Anastrophē* means manner of life—not conversation as we commonly use the word.
 - c. "Holy" is from *hagioi*, not just ceremonially holy. This is one form of the word translated "saint," "sanctified." The basic meaning of the word is separation, being set apart.
 4. "Because it is written, Be holy; for I am holy" (1:16).
 - a. "Is written" from *gegraptai*, it stand written. Jesus used the word over and over in his dealing with the devil (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10 and in many other passages). The word says, "It was written and it still applies."
 - b. The quotation is from Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7.
 - c. Those who maintain they can walk in their own ways and God's grace will take care of them do not understand this principle.
 5. "And if you call on the Father, who without

respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear" (9:17).

- a. "If you call on the Father" was not intended to express any doubt. This is called the condition of the first class and is assumed to be true. *Epikaleo* means to call a name or to name.
 - b. "Who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work."
 - (A) *Aprosopoleptos* means without regard to persons. The word literally means "one who does not receive the face" (Thayer).
 - (1) How does God look on man? Wealth, cultural heritage, academic achievement? "The Lord sees not as a man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks in the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
 - (2) This particular Greek word is found only here in the New Testament, but similar words are found in the biblical text (Acts 10:34; Jas. 2:9).
 - (B) "Judges" from *krinonta*. God always judges righteously, that is, according to a man's works or deeds (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - c. "Pass" from *anastrophete*, "conduct yourselves in fear" (RSV). This is the verb form of the word translated "conversation."
 - d. "Sojourning" from *paroikias*, to dwell beside, and so to be pilgrims and strangers (1 Pet. 1:1).
 - e. "Fear" (*phobo*) means worshipful respect or awe.
6. "Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and

gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (1:18).

- a. "Knowing" from *eidotes, oida*. We are commanded to be holy as God is holy "knowing that you were redeemed."
 - b. "Were redeemed" from *eluthrothete*, were released by payment of a ransom (Mt. 20:28).
 - c. The ransom paid was not corruptible (*phthartois*) things, that is, things which will perish.
 - d. "Silver" from *argurio* and gold from *chrusio* (from which we get our word "chrysalis"). These are among the most durable and most precious metals. If these were inadequate to purchase our salvation, then surely no other corruptible items would suffice.
 - e. "Vain" (*mataias*: empty, worthless) "conversation" (*anastrophes*).
 - f. "Received from your fathers" from *patroparadotou*, handed down from your fathers. *Pater*, father, *para*, down or beside, and *didomi*, to give.
7. "But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1:19).
- a. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things...but with the precious blood of Christ."
 - b. "Precious" from *time*, costly, honor.
 - c. "As a lamb (*amnou*)."
God required a lamb for the passover feast (Ex. 12:5). Cf. John 1:29.
 - d. *Amomou*, without blemish.
 - e. *Aspilou*, without spot, no imperfections.
8. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundations of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1:20).
- a. "Foreordained" from *prognosmenou*, fore-known, to know beforehand.
(A) Christ was foreordained to be a sacrifice

for the sins of the world. How can one explain this truth in view of premillennialism?

- (B) Was it the plan or the man who was foreordained?
 - b. "Foundation" from *kataboles*, thrown down. "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).
 - c. "Was manifest" from *phaneroo*, to shine. This was referring to Christ's incarnation.
 - d. "In these last times" from *ep' eschatou ton chronon*, at the end of the times (Heb. 1:2). At the end of the Jewish system.
9. "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" (1:21).
- a. "Who by him do believe in God, who raised him up from the dead."
 - (A) "Who" (you) by him (Christ) do believe in God.
 - (1) Christ reveals God to man (John 1:18; Col. 1:15).
 - (2) Our knowledge of God should be greater than that possessed by the Jews; we have the Son (John 14:9).
 - (B) "That raised up Christ from among the dead ones."
 - b. "And gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."
 - (A) Christ was glorified when he became both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:33-36; 5:31).
 - (B) Faith and hope must have a sure foundation; otherwise, they are merely wishes and vain longings. The resurrection provides that foundation.
 - (C) "And my speech and my preaching was

not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4-5).

D. Exhortation to love (1:22-25).

1. "Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1:22).
 - a. "Purifying" from *hagnizo*, to make pure, morally clean.
 - b. The tense of the verb is perfect. It places the action in the past with existing results. They purified their souls (*psuchas*).
 - c. How did they purify their hearts?
 - (A) Rom. 6:17-18.
 - (B) They purified their souls in obeying the truth.
 - d. "Unfeigned" from *anupokriton*, unhypocritical.
 - (A) "Without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3:17).
 - (B) "By love unfeigned" (2 Cor. 6:6).
 - e. "Love of the brethren" from *philadelphian*.
 - (A) "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1).
 - (B) "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Pet. 1:7).
 - f. "A pure heart." The right motives.
 - g. "Fervently" from *ektenos*, to stretch.
2. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever" (1:23).
 - a. "Being born again" from *anagegennemenoi*, "having been begotten again."
 - (A) Peter used the same word in verse 3:

"God has begotten us again unto a lively hope."

- (B) Love among brethren stems from our having the same Father, God almighty.
 - b. "Corruptible" from *phthartes* (v. 18). The natural seed by which life is begotten will perish. The "incorruptible" (*aphthartou*) will not.
 - c. "By the word of God which lives and abides forever."
 - (A) Peter identifies the incorruptible seed by calling it the word of God.
 - (B) "The seed of the kingdom is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11).
 - (1) Can physical life take place without the seed?
 - (2) The seed—the word of God—is essential to spiritual life.
 - d. "Lives" from *zontos*, living, referring to the word of God.
 - e. "Abides" from *menontos*, continuing.
3. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away" (1:24).
- a. "All flesh is as grass."
 - (A) This in no way belittles human beings.
 - (B) "Flesh" from *sarx* and refers to man's physical body.
 - (C) "Grass" from *chortos*, grass, hay, flowers.
 - (D) Life on earth is brief in comparison to eternity. Cf. James 4:13-17.
 - (E) Peter's quotation is from Isaiah 50:6-8.
 - b. "And all the glory of man as the flower of grass."
 - (A) Whatever glory man may enjoy—politically, financially, socially or otherwise—cannot last long. We have seen hundreds of cases of corporations, institutions and

- individuals who were prospering, but who disappeared almost without a trace.
- (B) If we want to endure forever, we must submit to God's will and live by it.
- c. "The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away."
- (A) "Withers" from *xeraino*, timeless aorist passive indicative, that is, it is accustomed to withering. That is usually what occurs.
- (B) "Falls" from *exepesen* (gnomic aorist) *ekipto*, to fall away or to fall out of (Jas. 1:11).
4. "But the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1:25).
- a. The noblest and mightest works of men decay and perish. Even the mighty pyramids in Egypt are decaying. Not so with the word of the Lord.
- b. "Word" from *rhema*, not *logos*. What is the difference?
- (A) *Rhema* is a "term more concrete, meaning an utterance, a thing said" (Woods, p. 52).
- (B) "*Rhema* lays stress on the dynamic effect of God's self-revelation, *logos* emphasizes more often its character of means" (Merrill C. Tenney, editor. **The Living Word of Revelation**, chapter on "The Meaning of Word, by Dr. Tenney, p. 22).
- c. "Endures" from *menei*, abides, remains.
- d. "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- (A) Literally, this is the word which was preached unto you.
- (B) "Preached" from *euangelisthen* (evangelize, evangelist) and means to preach the gospel. Peter identified the word which begot Christians is the gospel.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 Peter 1

- 1 Give some background on the apostle Peter.
- 2 To whom did the apostle Peter address his letter?
- 3 Define the following words: "elect," "sanctification," "uncorruptible," "undefiled," "fashioning" and "unfeigned."
- 4 Discuss what Peter says about heaven.
- 5 How can we know and love God whom we have not seen?
- 6 Explain: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently."
- 7 The apostle Peter urged his readers to "gird up the loins of you mind." What does he mean?
- 8 One theologian has written: "Maintaining holiness is not a condition of salvation." Show from this chapter how wrong such a view is.
- 9 How are men redeemed from their sins?
- 10 What role does obedience play in our salvation?
- 11 How long will the word of God last?

Chapter 2

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

CHAPTER 2

A. The missing link (2:1-10).

1. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (2:1).
 - a. "Wherefore" that is, because you are new creatures, a new life is demanded. "Put off" the old man and "put on" the new.
 - b. "Laying aside" from *apothemenoi*, having laid aside. The word is translated "putting off" (Rom. 13:12; Col. 3:5ff).
 - c. "Malice" from *kakian*, wickedness, vice of any kind.
 - d. "Guile" from *dolon (delo)*, to catch a fish with bait, deceit, enticed (Jas. 1:14), allure (2 Pet. 2:14).
 - e. "Evil speakings" from *katalalias*, "slander" (RSV). The literal meaning of the word is to speak against.
 - f. Hypocrisies and envyings.
2. "Like newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (2:2).
 - a. Newborn babes yearn for milk. We are to yearn (*epipthesate*) for the word in the same way a newborn yearns for milk. The word suggests intense yearning.
 - (A) "Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6).
 - (B) "As the hart pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God" (Psa. 42:1).

- b. "Sincere" from the Greek *logikon* and means rational, logical.
 - (A) The word is used only two times in the New Testament.
 - (B) It is translated "reasonable" (Rom. 12:1), "spiritual" (RSV).
 - c. "Pure spiritual milk" (RSV). "Pure" from *adolos*, without guile or deceit. The King James Version does not have a word for *adolos*.
 - d. "That you may grow thereby." Christians are to increase or to grow in grace and in knowledge of Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - e. Two textual problems:
 - (A) The expression, "of the word," does not appear in some manuscripts.
 - (B) Some manuscripts have *eis soterian*, unto salvation. Neither version constitutes a serious problem.
3. "If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (2:3).
 - a. "If" condition of the first class, since you have tasted.
 - b. "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psa. 34:8).
 - c. "Tasted the heavenly gift" (Heb. 6:4).
 - d. *Chrestos*, good, gracious.
 4. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (2:4).
 - a. Coming to the Lord. The verb suggests continual coming.
 - b. How can a stone be "living?" Is this a mixing of the metaphors?
 - c. "Disallowed" from *apodedokimasmēnon*, rejected, to reject after trial or examination (*dokimazo*).

- (A) The Jews examined Christ's claims to be the Messiah and decided he did not measure up to his claims. Hence, they rejected him.
 - (B) "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain and be raised the third day" (Lk. 9:22).
 - d. "Chosen" from *eklekton*, elected or selected. God elected Christ to come to earth, to die for our sins and to be raised for our justification.
 - e. "Precious" from *entimos*, worthy of honor. Notice: Men rejected Christ; God elected him.
5. "You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God" (2:5).
- a. "Lively stones" from *lithoi zontes*, living stones. We are alive unto righteousness. We derive our life from Christ who is the "living stone" (2:4).
 - b. "Built up" from *oikodomeo*, building or building up. The same word is used in reference to the building of the church (Mt. 16:18).
 - c. "Spiritual house" is in contrast to a physical or material house (1 Tim. 3:14-15).
 - d. "An holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices."
- (A) All Christians are priests. "Holy" from *hagion*, the same word translated "saint," and means set apart.
 - (B) "Offer up" from *anenekai*, to usual word for offering sacrifices (Heb. 7:27).
 - (C) Our sacrifices are to be spiritual sacrifices: prayer, praise, giving, etc. "Through him that let us offer up a sacrifice of

- praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips which make confession to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16).
- e. These sacrifices are acceptable unto God if offered by (*dia*: through) Jesus Christ.
6. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be confounded" (2:6).
- a. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone."
 (A) "Contained" from *periecho*, to surround.
 (B) The scripture mentioned by Peter is Isaiah 28:16. Peter's quotation is a fairly free paraphrase of Isaiah.
 (C) Christ is the chief or primary stone of the spiritual building of God.
- b. "Elect" from *eklekton*, chosen, selected. He is the one whom God selected or chose.
- c. "Precious" from *entimon* (*time*).
- d. "He that believes on him shall not be confounded."
 (A) Is this faith alone?
 (B) "Shall be confounded" from *kataischunthe*, should not be put to shame. "Hope makes not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5).
7. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner" (2:7).
- a. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."
 (A) Christ is not precious to everyone; only to you who believe.

- (B) "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23-24).
- b. "But unto them which be disobedient."
 (A) Some manuscripts have "disbelieve" instead of "disobedient." It really does not make any difference.
 (B) If men disbelieve, they will certainly be disobedient.
- c. "The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner."
 (A) This quotation is from Psalm 118:22.
 (B) The builders were the Jewish teachers. They rejected Israel's only hope. Do the modern builders of nations and families make the same mistake?
 (C) "Disallowed" from *apedokimasan*, rejected after examination. They considered what Jesus taught and who he was, then they rejected him.
 (D) "The same is made the head of the corner," that is, he is the very foundation of civilization, our only hope for time and for eternity.
8. "And a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (2:8).
- a. "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense."
 (A) "Stumbling" from *proskommatos*, to cut against. It means to collide with something, thus suffering injury (Woods, p. 61).
 (B) *Petra skandalou*, "a trap set to trip one"

- (Robertson, volume 6, p. 98). Our word "scandal" comes from the Greek *skandalon*.
- (1) Paul speaks of the "offense of the cross" (*skandalon*) (Gal. 5:11).
 - (2) Paul charged the Romans not to "put an occasion to fall" in a brother's way (Rom. 14:13). "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block (*proskamma*) or an occasion to fall (*skandalon*) in a brother's way" (Rom. 14:13).
 - (3) "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13). The verb "make offend" is from *skandalizo*.
- b. "Even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient."
 - (A) "Stumble" is the verb form (*proskoptousin*) of stumbling and means to cut against. It involves striking against an obstacle accidentally.
 - (B) The reason they stumble is because they are disobedient. Their disobedience is a natural fruit of their disbelief.
 - c. "Whereunto they were appointed."
 - (A) Were these disobedient people predestined to damnation?
 - (B) Robertson quotes Bigg as saying, "Their disobedience is not ordained; the penalty of their disobedience is" (volume 6, p. 98).
 - (C) This passage must be interpreted in such a way as to harmonize with the rest of scripture. We must not allow our interpretation to contradict other passages.
9. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priest-

hood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (2:9).

a. "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood."

(A) "Chosen" from *eklekton*, elected, selected.

There is no controversy over whether men are elected. The disagreement arises over how men are elected.

(1) Is man's election arbitrary or does man have any obligations in the matter of election?

(2) "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1:2).

(B) "Generation" from *genos*, race. Our English word "genocide" comes from this Greek word.

(C) *Basileion hierateuma*, kingly priesthood.

(1) "Kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6).

(2) Christ is the king and priest over his kingdom. We are all priests in his kingdom.

b. "An holy nation, a peculiar people."

(A) *Ethnos hagion*, a nation set apart for God's purpose. The English word, "ethnic" comes from the Greek *ethnos*.

(B) *Laos eis peripoiesin*, a people for God's own possession. The verb form of *peripoiesin* is used in Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders and is translated "purchased" (Acts 20:28). It is also rendered "purchase" in 1 Timothy 3:13. The noun is translated "purchased

possession" (Eph. 1:14), "to obtain" (1 Thess. 5:9), "saving" (Heb. 10:39).

(1) "For you are an holy people unto the Lord your God: the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Dt. 7:6).

(2) "And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him" (Mal. 3:17).

c. "That you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

(A) Why has God made us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a people for his own possession?

(B) "To show forth God's praises."

(1) "Show forth" from *exangeilete*, to out, to publish, to tell forth, to divulge, to declare abroad, celebrate (*exangelilo*). This word is used only here in the New Testament.

(2) "Praises" from *aretas*, virtues, moral worth.

a. "If there be any virtue" (Phil. 4:8).

b. "Add to your faith virtue" (2 Pet. 1:5).

(C) We are called out of darkness "into his marvelous light." That light at which we marvel (*thaumastos*).

10. "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (2:10).

- a. "Which in time past were not a people, but are not the people of God."
 - (A) This is a quotation from Hosea 2:23.
 - (B) One of the sons of Hosea and Gomer was named Lo-ammi, which means, "not my people." The Gentiles under the old covenant fit that description (Eph. 2:11-22). Now the Gentiles along with the Jews are God's people.
 - b. "Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."
 - (A) Another son of Hosea and Gomer was named Lo-ruhamah which means "Not-Pitied." "I will have pity on No-Pitied" (RSV).
 - (B) The Gentiles have now received (*eleemenoï*), obtained. Mercy has been shown through the sacrifices of Jesus Christ.
- B. Conduct before unbelievers (2:11-12).
1. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (2:11).
 - a. *Agapetoi*, brothers. This shows Peters relationship to the ones to whom he wrote.
 - b. *Parakaleo*, to call to one's side for comfort and aid.
 - c. *Paroikous*, one who dwells beside.
 - d. *Parepidemous*, to sojourn by the side of natives.
 - e. "Fleshly lusts" from *sarkikon epithumion*, the grosser sins of the flesh.
 - f. *Strateuontai*, to carry on a campaign against the soul (Jas. 4:1). Paul does not use the same language we are studying in 1 Peter, but he speaks of the continuous struggle between the flesh and the spirit (Gal. 5:16-24).
 2. "Having your conversation honest among the

Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (2:12).

- a. "Conversation" from *anastrophēn*, conduct, manner of life.
- b. "Honest" from *kalen*, seemly.
- c. "Among the Gentiles," that is, those outside the Israel of God. Christians must live their confession; not simply profess it.
- d. "That (*hina*, in order that), whereas they speak against (*katalalousin*) as evildoers (*kakopoion*)." "They may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

(A) What good works are Christians to perform? If they do not perform them, will it make any difference in their eternal salvation?

(B) "Shall behold" from *epoptes*, overseer, spectator. The word is translated "eyewitness" (2 Pet. 1:16).

(C) "Visitation" from *episkopes*, to inspect. Visiting for what purpose? Judgment or mercy?

C. Submission to civil rulers (2:13-17).

1. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme" (2:13).

- a. "Submit" from *hupotasso*, to arrange under, or to array under. The word does not suggest inferiority.
- b. *Pase anthropine ktisei*, literally every human creation or institution.

(A) What kind of government is implied in this verse? Democracy, dictatorship, monarchy, etc.?

- (B) Would there be any exceptions to the requirements of some governments?
- c. *Dia ton kurion*, for the Lord's sake. This would prohibit a Christians's involvement in anarchy.
 - d. We must obey the government, whether it be to a king, as supreme (*huperechonti*, to stand out above). Cf. Romans 13.
2. "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (2:14).
 - a. "Governors" from *hegemosin*, leader. This term is not the equivalent of our word for governor. It would be broader than the English word. "Esteem them very highly in love" (1 Thess. 5:13).
 - b. Governmental leaders are sent (*pempo*) by God. God ordained human government, although he does not necessarily approve of all governmental actions.
 - c. "For the punishment of evil doers." Punishment is from *ekdikesis*, vengeance.
 - d. "And for the praise of them that do evil" (*agathopoion*).
 3. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (2:15).
 - a. In Cecil B. DeMille's movie, **The Ten Commandments**, the Jews ask the wife of Moses what has happened to him. She mentions that Moses is doing the will of God. Dathan, the Hebrew overseer, asks with a smirk: "And who knows the will of God?"
 - b. Nobody could know the will of God unless God decided to reveal his will to men. Inspired writers both in the Old Testament and in the New – constantly affirm that they are speaking for God – that they are revealing the will of

- God. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:3-5; Heb. 2:1-2
- c. The will of God is that Christians should obey the laws of the land unless they conflict with the laws of God.
 - d. The outsiders may have thought Christians would disobey the law of the land. They may have thought their higher allegiance would lead them to be lawless men and women.
 - (A) But Christians by their lawful conduct would put to silence the ignorance of such people.
 - (B) "Well doing" must be defined by God's standards, not humanistic ones.
 - (C) "Silence" from *phimoun* (*phimos*: muzzle). The same word is translated "speechless" (Mt. 22:12).
 - e. *Ten ton aphronon anthropon agnosian*. "A type of ignorance that is wilfull, persistent and disgraceful in nature" (Woods, p. 73).
4. "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as servants of the Lord" (2:16).
- a. "Live as free men" (RSV).
 - b. Even though we have the greatest freedom men can know, we are not free to do wrong.
 - (A) Many modernistic theologians interpret biblical freedom as removing all moral and spiritual restrictions. They claim that the grace of God will take care of our sins, even when we know we are doing wrong.
 - (B) "Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound? Absolutely not" (Rom. 6:1-2).
 - c. "Not using your liberty (*eleutherian*: freedom) as a cloke of covetousness."
 - (A) "Not using your freedom as a pretext of evil" (RSV).

- (B) "Cloke" from *epikalumma* (*epikalupto*: covered, Rom. 4:7).
- (C) "Maliciousness" from *kakias*, evil, wickedness, naughtiness.
- d. "But as servants of God."
 - (A) As slaves or bondmen of God.
 - (B) "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage" (2 Pet. 2:19).
- 5. "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (2:17).
 - a. "Honor" from *timesate*, precious, show all men honor. The tense of the verb is aorist and should read, "as the occasion arises, honor all men."
 - b. The other three verbs are present active imperatives: Love the brotherhood continually; fear God always; continue to honor the king (or whatever ruler is in power).
- D. Servants' responsibilities to their masters (2:18-25).
 - 1. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (2:18).
 - a. "Servants" from *oiketai*, house or domestic servants. The servants of Cornelius are described as being "house servants" (Acts 10:7).
 - b. "Masters" from *despotais*, absolute owners. Our word "despot" comes from this Greek word.
 - c. "Be subject" from *hupotasso*, submit, obey. The same word used in reference to wives (Eph. 5:22-24), to members' obeying elders (Heb. 13:17).
 - d. "Fear" (*phobo*) means respect, awe, reverence—not cringing fear.

- e. "Good" (*agathois*) and "gentle" (*epieikesin*). Cf. Jas. 3:17; Phil. 4:5.
 - f. "Froward" (*skoliois*), crooked. The disease known as scoliosis—a crooked spine—comes from this Greek word. How can a Christian obey a crooked or stubborn master?
2. "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (2:19).
- a. "Thankworthy" from *charis*, grace. "Is approved" (RSV). "Acceptable" (RV). We would say, "This is service above and beyond the call of duty."
 - b. "If a man for conscience toward God endure grief," that is, suffering because it is one's duty toward God. Suffering as such does not necessarily bring blessings (1 Pet. 3:13-14; 4:12-16).
 - c. "Endure" from *hupophero*, from *hupo*, under, and *phero*, to bear.
 - (A) Christians bear up under griefs (*lupas*, pl.).
 - (B) "A way of escape" (1 Cor. 10:13).
 - d. "Suffering wrongfully."
 - (A) What would "suffering rightfully" mean?
 - (B) *Paschon adikos*, suffering unjustly. Jesus used the word "falsely" (*pseudomenoi*) in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:10-12).
3. "For what glory is it, if, when you are buffeted for your faults, you shall take it patiently? But if, when you do well, and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (2:20).
- a. Literally, "what kind of glory is it."
 - b. "Buffeted" from *kolaphizo*, to strike with the fist, to pummel. The word is used of the mistreatment which Christ received prior to his crucifixion (Mt. 26:67; Mk. 14:65). "Even

unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place" (1 Cor. 4:11).

- c. "Faults" from *harmartanontes*, sinning. "Do wrong and are beaten for it" (RSV).
 - d. "Patiently" from *hupomone*, bear up under or to remain under. "Stedfast" is a good translation of the Greek.
 - e. If we do well and have to suffer for it, this is acceptable (*charis*: grace) with God. "Grace" in this context would indicate going beyond what is normally expected.
4. "For even hereunto were you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps" (2:21).
- a. "Hereunto" refers to our being called to suffer for the cause of Christ. There is no glory necessarily in suffering, but we do benefit when we suffer for the cause of Christ.
 - b. Christ suffered for us. His suffering did not result from any wrongdoing on his part; he suffered for our sins.
 - (A) If the Master suffered, how do his disciples imagine they can escape? "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" (John 15:20).
 - (B) It is significant that he suffered "for us." His suffering was according to God's plan.
 - c. "Leaving us an example."
 - (A) Literally, "leaving behind." The Greek says, "Leaving you an example."

- (B) "Example" from *hupogrammon*, a model.
- (1) *Hupo*, under, *grapho*, to write.
 - (2) "A writing copy for one to imitate" (Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 6, p. 104).
- d. "That you should follow in his steps."
- (A) "That" (*hina*) is a word of purpose.
 - (B) Christians are urged to follow the example of Jesus Christ. "I have given you an example (*hupodeigma*), that you should do as I have done unto you" (John 13:15).
 - (C) In order to live like Christ, we must think like Christ (Phil. 2:5).
5. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (2:22).
- a. This is a quotation from Isaia 53:9: "Because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."
 - b. Jesus Christ did not commit any sins. He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19).
 - c. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
 - d. "Guile" from *dolos*, a bait to catch a fish.
6. "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him who judges righteously" (2:23).
- a. "Reviled" from *loidoroumenos*, being railed at. The word means abusive speech. The imperfect tense suggests that Christ constantly suffering from being reviled.
 - b. "Reviled not again." He kept on not reviling again.
 - c. "When he suffered." *Paschon*.

- d. "He continued not threatening. Repeated acts. When the enemies of Christ kept on causing him to suffer, he kept on not threatening.
 - e. "He committed himself to him who judges righteously."
 - (A) "Committed" from *paredidou*, gave himself over. He kept on giving himself over or kept on committing himself to God.
 - (B) God always judges righteously. Christ knew that in the final analysis, he would be exonerated. But what if there is no life after death? What possible motivation could we have for not returning evil for evil?
7. "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 you are healed" (2:24).
- a. The sacrifices of the old covenant were animals, but the sacrifice of the new was Jesus Christ. "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He takes away the first that he may established the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:9-10).
 - b. "Bare" from *anegken*, *anaphero*, of bring the sacrifice to the altar. Jesus Christ is our sin offering. "For even Christ our passover (*pascha*: paschal lamb) is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).
 - c. "Tree" from *xulon*, originally used of wood (1 Cor. 3:12); then of something made of wood. Cf. Acts 5:30; 10:39.
 - d. "Being dead to sins" literally means "having

- died to sins." *Apoginomai*, to get away from, to die to anything.
- e. We have died to sins that (*hina*: in order that) we should live unto righteousness. Cf. Romans 6.
 - f. "By whose stripes you were healed."
 - (A) *Molopi*, bruise or bloody wound. Cf. Isaiah 53:5.
 - (B) "Were healed" from *iaomai*, to heal (Jas. 5:16).
 - (C) How do we know that Christ's sufferings and death benefit us? We can know only because of divine revelation.
8. "For we were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (2:25).
- a. Isaiah wrote, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6).
 - b. "Going astray" from *planomenoi* (*planao*), to wander astray. *Planes* is used of those who "err from the truth" (Jas. 5:19). Our English word "planet" comes from this Greek word.
 - c. "Returned" from *epistrepho*, to turn or to return. The word is translated "be converted" in Acts 3:19, but should be rendered "turn."
 - d. Jesus is the Shepherd (*poimena*).
 - (A) "The good shepherd" (John 10:11).
 - (B) "The chief shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4).
 - e. Jesus is also our bishop (*episkopos*). Peter uses the verb form of this word in outlining the duties of elders ("feed" 1 Pet 5:2). Cf. Ezekiel 34:11ff.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 Peter 2

- 1 What must Christians lay aside when they obey the gospel? Explain each of the terms.
- 2 What does Peter mean by the expression, "tasted the Lord?"
- 3 The church of our Lord is not a building. How does the apostle Peter describe the church?
- 4 Why is Christ precious to some and a stone which the builders disallowed to others?
- 5 Why does Peter describe Christ as "stone of stumbling, a rock of offense?"
- 6 Discuss each of the following: "a chosen generation," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation" and "peculiar people."
- 7 Christians must submit to civil rulers. Does it matter what kind of ruler is in power?
- 8 Why would the apostle Peter command servants (slaves) to be obedient to their masters? Why did he not instruct them to rebel against their masters?
- 9 What does the word "thankworthy" mean?
- 10 The apostle Peter appeals to Isaiah 53 in discussing the work of Christ.

Chapter 3

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

CHAPTER 3

A. Duties of wives to husbands (3:1-6).

1. "Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (3:1).
 - a. "Likewise" means "in like manner" and refers to wives being in subjection as servants were to be in subjection to their masters (1 Pet. 2:18).
 - b. "Subjection" from *hupotasso*, to rank or to array under. **The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) renders the verb "committed" (p. 364). The same verb is used of wives in Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:4.
 - c. "Your own husbands."
 - d. "That, if any obey not the word."
 - (A) That is, if the husbands are not Christians. Condition of the first class, assumed to be true.
 - (B) Paul encourages families to stay together even though one of the partners is not a Christian. "For what do you know, O wife, whether you shall save your husband? Or how do you know, O man, whether you shall save your wife" (1 Cor. 7:12)?
 - e. "They also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives."

- (A) "May be won" from *kerdethesontai*, may be gained for the cause of Christ.
- (B) "Without the word" should be rendered "without a word." The definite article does not appear in the original. No one can be won to Christ without the word since it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16).
- (C) The husband may be brought to Christ without any words from his wife. That does not prevent every wife from trying to teach her husband, but sometimes teaching is not welcomed by the husband.
- f. "Conversation" from *anastrophes*, manner of life. The husband may be won by the godly living of his wife and not by constant nagging.
- 2. "While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear" (3:2).
 - a. "Behold" from *epopteusantes* (*epopteuo*) to be an overseer, to view very carefully. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:12).
 - b. "Chaste" from *hagnen* suggests moral purity in all areas of life – not just in sexual matters.
- 3. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing gold, or of putting on of apparel" (3:3).
 - a. "Adorning" from *kosmos*, cosmetic.
 - (A) Women were instructed to "adorn" themselves in modest apparel (*kosmio*) (1 Tim. 2:12).
 - (B) Elders are charged to be of good behavior (1 Tim. 3:2). *Kosmion*, orderly, decorous.

- (C) Life means more than just decorating the outward body.
 - (D) "Plaiting" from *empleko*, to inweave.
 - (E) Are attractive clothing, the wearing of jewelry, and making one's hair attractive forbidden?
- b. *Peritheseos chusion*, putting around of gold. Are we forbidden to wear gold?
 - c. "Putting on of apparel."
 - (A) "Putting on" from *euduo*, our word for "endue," to be clothed.
 - (B) "Apparel" from *himation*, garments. "Peter is not forbidding the wearing of clothes and ornaments, but the display of finery by contrast" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 109).
4. "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (3:4).
- a. "The hidden (*kouptos*) man of the heart" is equivalent to the "inward man" (2 Cor. 4:16) and the "new man" (Col. 3:10).
 - b. Outward dress is corruptible, but character is not corruptible. Even though gold is a precious metal and rather enduring, it cannot last forever.
 - c. "Incorruptible" from *aphtharto*, imperishable.
 - d. "Even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit."
 - (A) The Greek had no word for "ornament" or "apparel" (RV) in this verse, but one of the words is probably inferred.
 - (B) There is clothing which which is always appropriate and beautiful—"a meek and quiet spirit."
 - (1) "She girds her loins with strength, and strengthens her arms....Strength

and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come" (Prov. 31:17, 25).

(2) "Meek" from *praus* and means free of envy, pride.

(3) "Quiet spirit" means calm, tranquil, at peace.

e. "Which is in the sight of God of great price."

(A) "Great price" from *poluteles*, *polu*, many, *telos*, of real worth.

(B) How do human beings generally regard such a person?

5. "For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands" (3:5).

a. After what manner? "A meek and quiet spirit."

b. Imperfect active: Were accustomed to adorn themselves. It was their habit.

c. "Old time" means "formerly" (*pote*).

d. "The holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves."

(A) Hebrews 11:11, 35 describes such women.

(B) "Trusted" from *elipzo*, hoped in God.

(C) "Adorned" from *ekosmoun* (*kosmion*). The word means orderly, decorous.

e. "Being in subjection to their own husbands."

(A) **The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version** translates this passage: "Wives, in the same way, be committed to your husbands....It was their way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by committing themselves to their husbands.... Sarah listened to Abraham and gave him allegiance."

- (B) "Subjection" is the same word used in verse 1. It means to array or to arrange under. It is the same word used of submitting to elders of the church (Heb. 13:17).
6. "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (3:6).
- a. "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord."
- (A) Should women call their husbands "lord" today?
- (B) "Lord" (*kurios*) can be rendered sir, master, or mister.
- (C) The new version renders the Greek "listened." That is a deliberate attempt to appease the feminists. The word is "obey" – not listen.
- (D) The message here is too plain to miss. Wives should respect their husbands.
- b. "Whose daughters you are, as long as you do well."
- (A) Literally, "whose daughters you became" by following the example of Sarah.
- (B) "As long as you do well," that is, as long as you walk in obedience to God's will.
- c. "And are not afraid with any amazement."
- (A) "And are not put in fear by any terror" (RV).
- (B) "If you do right and let nothing terrify you" (RSV).
- (C) "Put in fear" from *phoboumenai*, not fearing.
- (D) "Amazement" from *ptoestin*, consternation, terror.

- D. Duties of husbands to wives. "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (3:7).
1. "Likewise," that is, advice like that given to servants (2:18), wives (3:1-6). The expression may also point back to 2:17; "Honor all."
 2. "Dwell" from *sunoikountes* (*sunoikeo*) and denotes domestic association.
 - a. The tense of the verb is present active imperative, a command with continuous application.
 - b. When the ardor in the marriage relationship begins to cool, we still have an obligation to dwell with our spouses.
 3. "According to knowledge."
 - a. "With an intelligent recognition of the nature of the marriage relationship" (Vincent, **Word Studies of the New Testament**, volume 1, p. 651).
 - b. Where do we get the knowledge which will help us to keep our marriages together and reasonably happy?
 - c. Are we imparting adequate knowledge for our young people so that they may have good marriages?
 4. "Giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel."
 - a. "Giving" from *aponemontes* (*aponemo*), to assign, to portion out.
 - b. "Weaker vessel" (*asthenesteroi skeuei*).
 - (A) Both husband and wife are designated vessels "or parts of the furniture in God's house" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 110).
 - (B) Is the wife "weaker" intellectually, morally, spiritually or physically?

- (C) Does this mean that the husband must provide for and protect his wife?
5. "And as being heirs together of the grace of life."
 - a. "Heirs together" means joint-heirs, fellow heirs
 - b. Men and women are partners in the Lord's work, but they do not have the same functions.
 6. "That your prayers be not hindered."
 - a. "Hindered" from *enkopto*, to cut into, to interrupt, like someone's cutting the telephone line while we are talking.
 - b. "For the which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (Rom. 15:22).
 - c. Is Paul actually saying that if a man does not give his wife her portion of honor his prayers will not be heard?
 - d. If this does not show the importance of men's treating their wives with respect, I would not know what would.
- C. Duties of Christians to one another (3:8-12).
1. "Finally, be all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (3:8).
 - a. "Finally" from *to telos*, to the end.
 - b. Christians are to be "all of one mind."
 - c. "Having compassion" from *sumpatheis*, *sun*, with, *pascho*, to feel. Our word "sympathy" comes from this Greek word, but the Greek has a deeper meaning than the English word. "Compassion" comes nearer to the original meaning, although this is not the usual Greek word for compassion. The idea is entering into the other person's feelings. "I sat where they sat."
 - d. "Love as brethren" from *philadelphoi*.
 - e. "Pitiful" from *eusplanchnoi*, tender-hearted, full of pity, literally "good (*eu*) hearted." The

- Greek in this expression is usually rendered "compassion."
- f. "Courteous" from *philophrones*, friendly, gracious. Many manuscripts have *tapeinophrones*, humble-minded.
2. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing" (3:9).
 - a. "Rendering" from *apodidontes*, giving back. The word is sometimes translated "recompense." "Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Rom. 12:17).
 - b. "Evil" from *kakon*, a generic word for evil.
 - c. "Railing" from *loidorian*, reviling (1 Pet. 2:23), abusive speech.
 - d. On the contrary, Christians are to render "blessing." "Blessing" is a verb, present active participle, *eulogountes*, continually be a blessing.
 - e. "Knowing" from *oida*, to have full assurance, knowing for certain.
 - f. Christians are called to render blessing and to inherit a blessing.
 3. "For he who will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile" (3:10).
 - a. "He who wills (*thelon*) to love (*agapan*) life." Both verbs are present active participles and could be rendered: "He who continually wills or wishes to keep on loving life."
 - b. This quotation is from Psalm 34:12-16 and generally follows the Septuagint (the Greek text—not the Hebrew).
 - c. "And see good days." Happy, useful, profitable days.
 - d. "Let him refrain his tongue from evil."

- (A) "Refrain" from *pauo*, to make stop.
 (B) "Evil" from *kakon*, a general term for evil.
- e. "And his lips that they speak no guile."
 Guile from *dolon*, a bait used to catch a fish.
4. "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (3:11).
- a. "Eschew" from *ekklino*, to turn away. The word is translated "gone out of the way" (Rom. 3:12) and "avoid" (Rom. 16:17).
- b. "Do good" as defined by what standard?
- c. "Let him seek peace and ensue it."
 (A) "Ensuite" from *dioko*, to pursue, to follow.
 (B) All three verbs—do good, seek and pursue—are commands (first aorist active imperatives) and demand immediate action.
5. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (3:12).
- a. The eyes (*ophthalmoi*) of the Lord are over the righteous, literally "upon" (*epi*) the righteous.
 b. He listens to their supplications (*deesin*).
 c. His face is against those who do evil.
- D. Suffering for righteousness' sake (3:13-17).
1. "And who is he who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good" (3:13)?
- a. "Will harm" from *kakoson* (*kakos*), or who wishes to harm you or one who does harm you.
 b. "If you be followers of that which is good."
 (A) "Followers" from *mimetai*, imitators, mimics.
 (B) RV has "zealous" from *zelotai*, zealots for good.
 c. Peter is not teaching that evil men will not persecute the righteous if they do right. The

whole text of this epistle would be against such a meaning. He is saying that permanent harm cannot come to God's people. God will see to that.

3. "But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (3:14).
 - a. The apostle leaves absolutely no doubt that Christians will suffer for their devotion to Christ. Christ himself had foretold such sufferings. "But when they persecute you in this city, flee into another: for verily I say unto you, You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord" (Mt. 10:23-24).
 - b. If their sufferings were really for righteousness' sake, they should consider themselves "happy" (*makarioi*, fortunate, blessed, spiritually prosperous).
 - c. "Afraid" from *phobethete*, do not be influenced by their terror. "Have no fear of them" (RSV).
 - d. "Troubled" from *taraxthete* (*tarrasso*) to disturb. The King James Version always renders the verb "troubled."
3. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (3:15).
 - a. "Sanctify" from *hagiasate* and means to set apart Christ as Lord in your heart. This Greek verb is also rendered "holy" and "saint." Some manuscripts have "Christ" instead of God. "Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts."
 - b. What does it mean to set Christ apart in our hearts? What difference will that make in our lives?

- c. "Be ready" from *hetoimoi*, be prepared. How does one get prepared to provide answers to those who ask us about our faith?
- (A) We must make an intense investigation of the Bible. How can we teach what we do not know?
- (B) We seek guidance from God almighty (Jas. 1:5).
- (C) What part does being holy play in our teaching others about Christ?
- d. "Answer" from *apologian*, apology.
- (A) The field of apologetics is justified by this command.
- (B) *Apologemai*: verb.
- (1) "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with his hand, and would have made his defence unto the people" (Acts 19:33).
- (2) "Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that you have been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself" (Acts 24:10).
- (3) "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing (*apologoumenon*) one another" (Rom. 2:15)
- (C) *Apologia*: noun.
- (1) "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear my defence which I make now unto you" (Acts 22:1).
- (2) "To whom I answered, It is not the

manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him" (Acts 25:16).

- (3) "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this" (1 Cor. 9:3).
 - (4) "What clearing of themselves" (2 Cor. 7:11).
 - (5) "Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of my grace" (Phil. 1:7).
 - (6) "But the other of love, knowing I am set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17).
 - (7) "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge" (2 Tim. 4:16).
- (D) The verb form is used ten times and the noun form eight times.
- (E) Definitions of apologetics.
- (1) Leander S. Keyser. **A System of Christian Evidence.** "Christian apologetics is the scientific vindication of the divine authority of the Christian religion" (p. 21).
 - (2) Edward John Carnell. **An Introduction to Christian Apologetics.** "Apologetics is that branch of Christian theology which answers the question, Is Christianity rationally defensible" (p. 7)?
- (F) There are people who inquire about our

faith in Christ, our allegiance to the Bible as the word of God, our commitment to New Testament Christianity. We ought not to object to questions even if they are asked for the wrong reasons and with the wrong attitude.

- (G) "Reason" from *logos*, word, treatise. Jesus Christ is the "Word" (*logos*).
 - (H) Christians are obligated to provide a reason for their hope. Just to say, "It feels right" or "this is what parents believe" or "this is what the church of Christ teaches" is not a very good defense of our faith.
 - (I) Does it matter how we answer questions about our faith? "Meekness and fear." Not timidity or weakness, but submitting meekly to God's will and in respect and reverence for God's inspired word. We must also show respect for those who ask questions—regardless of their motivations.
4. "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (3:16).
- a. "Having a good conscience."
 - (A) What is the conscience?
 - (B) Where is it located?
 - (C) How does it function?
 - (D) What steps are necessary to have a good conscience?
 - (E) Is the conscience a safe guide?
 - b. Some people will speak evil of Christians as evil doers regardless of how Christians live. They spoke evil of Christ; they surely will speak evil of his followers.
 - c. When the people of the world take note of

our dedication to Christ, they ought to be ashamed of their evil speaking.

(A) "Speak evil of" from *katalaleo*, to speak against.

(B) "Falsely accuse" from *epereazo*, revile, culminate, spiteful abuse.

d. "Conversation" means manner of life; conduct; behavior. Christians must so live that no one can have a legitimate accusation against us.

5. "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing" (3:17).

a. When one suffers for stealing or killing, he is receiving just recompense.

b. Suffering for the cause of Christ will bring great reward. "Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Mt. 5:11-12).

E. Christ's suffering (3:18-22).

1. "For Christ also has 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 in the Spirit" (3:18).

a. "Once" (*hapax*) means once for all, once never to be repeated.

b. "Has suffered" from *epathen* (RV, died, *apethanen*).

c. Christ's suffering was vicarious, "the just for the unjust," the righteous for the unrighteous.

d. The purpose of his suffering was that "he might bring us to God."

(A) God wanted all men and women to have

- the opportunity of believing and obeying the gospel.
- (B) "Bring" from *prosago*, to lead or to bring to.
- e. "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit."
- (A) Christ was killed in his fleshly body, but he was raised or quickened.
- (B) We are to put to death those desires and appetites which separate us from God.
- (C) We are made alive through the Spirit of God. "Even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ; by grace are you saved" (Eph. 2:5).
- (D) Take note of Peter's emphasis on Christ's resurrection.
2. "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison" (3:19).
- a. "By which" refers to the Spirit.
- b. *Poreutheis*, having gone, he preached (*ekeruzen*).
- c. When did he go to preach to the spirits in prison? What prison?
- d. "It should be noted that Peter does not declare that these who were the objects of his preaching were in a disembodied state and in prison when the preaching was done; such was their condition when he wrote" (Woods, p. 101).
- e. He explains in the next verse what was involved.
3. "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water" (3:20).

- a. "Which sometimes were disobedient" refers to the spirits in prison.
 - b. The time of that disobedience is spelled out in the expression.
 - c. "When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."
 - (A) "Longsuffering" from *makrothumia*, long mind, or long anger. Peter used the same word in the following verse: "God is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - (B) "While the ark was preparing." Christ sent Noah to preach to the sinful people while the ark was being prepared.
 - d. "Eight souls were saved (*diesothesan*) by water."
 - (A) *Di hudatos*, through water. Water was the means God used to cleanse the earth of evil and to save Noah's family from destruction.
 - (B) "By means of water" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 119).
4. "The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Christ" (3:21).
- a. "The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us."
 - (A) The word "figure" is from *antitupon*, "after the true likeness" (RV).
 - (1) What is the *tupon*, the type? As eight souls in the ark were saved by water, so we are saved by baptism.

- (2) "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you" (RSV).
 - (3) "And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (**The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version**, p. 365).
- (B) "Baptism now saves us."
- (1) Baptism alone?
 - (2) "The saving by baptism which Peter here mentions is only symbolic (a metaphor or picture as in Romans 6:2-6)" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 119).
 - (3) Was the saving of Noah's family symbolic or actual?
 - (4) Other passages show that baptism is not figurative: Mark 16:15-16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27.
- b. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh."
- (A) "Not the removal of dirt from the body" (**Inclusive Version**, p. 365).
 - (B) "Baptism, Peter explains, does not wash away the filth of the flesh either in a literal sense, as a bath for the body, or in a metaphorical sense of the filth of the soul" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 119).
 - (C) Is that really what Peter was teaching?
 - (D) "Filth" from *rupou*, vile (Jas. 2:2).
- c. "The answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."
- (A) "Answer" from *eperotema*, demand, "an appeal to God for a clear conscience" (RV).
 - (B) "A good conscience" is one which has

not violated the principles which one espouses. The good conscience seeks for God's will and does it.

(C) Baptism saves us because Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

5. "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (3:22).
 - a. "Who" refers to Christ.
 - b. "Having gone" into heaven refers to his ascension.
 - c. "Authorities (*exousion*) and powers (*dunameon*) being made subject unto him."
 - d. Christ made him the head over all things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23) and gave him all authority (Mt. 28:18).

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 Peter 3

- 1 When Peter commanded wives to be submissive to their husbands, does that not make wives inferior?
- 2 How can wives win their husbands to Christ without a (not *the*) word?
- 3 What does the word "conversation" mean?
- 4 What does the apostle Peter teach about the dress of Christian women? Does he forbid the wearing of jewelry?
- 5 Sarah called Abraham "lord." What does that mean?
- 6 Husbands are to dwell with their wives according to knowledge. Explain.
- 7 How is the wife the "weaker vessel."
- 8 If a man does not treat his wife with respect, would that affect his prayers?
- 9 What does "heirs together" mean?
- 10 What must a Christian do if he will love life and see good days?
- 11 Peter urges Christians to "sanctify the Lord God in their hearts." What does "sanctify" mean?
- 12 Christians must be prepared to "give an answer." What does the word "answer" mean? What should be our attitude when we give an answer?
- 13 Christ's sufferings are examples for Christians. Discuss.
- 14 Discuss the flood and baptism.

Chapter 4

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

CHAPTER 4

A. Christ's sufferings are examples for us (4:1-6).

1. "Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" (4:1).

a. "Forasmuch then" refers to what Christ has done for us: "Leaving us an example that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).

b. The fleshly sufferings of Christ paid the debt for our sins.

c. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind."

(A) "Arm" from *hoplizo*, *hoplon* weapon. Cf. Eph. 6:10-18.

(B) "The same mind," that is, the mind of our Lord Jesus (Phil. 2:5).

d. "For he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin."

(A) Not all suffering is honorable; suffering for righteousness' sake is.

(B) When a man has suffered in the flesh for the sake of God's kingdom, does that mean he has completely ceased sinning?

(C) When one is suffering for the name of Christ, sin loses its appeal, but no man lives completely above sin (1 John 1:8-10).

2. "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (4:2).

a. Christians are not to live the remainder of

- the time which God allows them in the sinful ways of the world.
- b. Instead, they are to live for the will of God.
 - c. If we arm ourselves with the mind of Christ, will we not live in sin. Cf. Romans 6:1; 1 John 3:9-10).
3. "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (4:3).
- a. The people to whom Peter wrote had been "Gentiles in the flesh." Their past lives had been characterized by gross immorality (Rom. 1; Eph. 4).
 - b. "To have wrought" from *kateirgazomai*, *kata*, *ergon*, work.
 - c. Peter would have hardly used this language of Jews who had lived under the law of God.
 - d. "Lasciviousness" from *aselgeiais* is not a very common word in the New Testament (used nine times). It is always rendered either "lasciviousness" or "wantonness" (Rom. 13:13; 2 Pet. 2:18) or "filthy" (2 Pet. 2:7).
 - (A) William Barclay defines the word as "wanton insolence that is lost to shame" (NT Words, p. 62).
 - (B) J. B. Lightfoot says that such a man "shocks public decency" (Barclay, p. 60).
 - (C) The word involves unbridled lust.
 - (D) Vine: "denotes excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness" (p. 640).
 - (E) Guy N. Woods says the word refers to outward deeds—not to lusts only.
 - f. "Lusts" is from *epithumiais*, a generic term which means desires. When the translators

- thought the word referred to immoral or forbidden thoughts, they rendered the word "lusts." Otherwise, they translated it "desire" (Phil. 1:23).
- g. "Revellings" from *komois* (*keimai*) to lie down, riotous drinking parties.
- (A) Vine: "A revel, carousal, the committant and consequence of drunkenness" (p. 965).
- (B) The word was first used of innocent "village merrymaking, but later came to be applied to rioting, drinking parties" (p. 109).
- (C) "Excessive feasting, carousing, revelry" (Arndt & Gingrich, p. 462).
- (D) "Feasts and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry" (Thayer, p. 367).
- h. "Excess of wine."
- (A) *Oinophulgiaia*, *oinos*, wine, *phluo*, to bubble up.
- (B) The word is translated "drunkenness" in some versions.
- i. "Banquetings" from *potois*, drinkings, carousings, from *pino*, to drink. "Drinking matchers in which the parties sought to outdo each other" (Woods, p. 109).
- j. "Abominable idolatries."
- (A) Many of the practices Peter has mentioned were engaged in as acts of worship in idol temples.
- (B) "Abominable" from *athemitos*, unlawful.
- (C) All idolatry was unlawful for Christians.
4. "Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (4:4).
- a. "Wherein" means literally "in which thing, that is, the manner of life.

- b. "Think it strange" from *xenizontai*, *xenos*, stranger. "You mean you do not drink or gamble or commit adultery? What do you live for?" Worldly people cannot understand the motivation and behavior of Christian people.
 - c. "Run not with them" means to run together like a crowd, or a mob, running, with certain folks.
 - d. "Excess" from *anachusin*, overflowing.
 - e. "Riot" from *asotias*, chief characteristic of an abandoned man.
 - (A) "Be not drunk with wine, where is excess" (Eph. 5:18).
 - (B) The prodigal son "wasted his life with riotous living" (Lk. 15:13).
 - f. "Speaking evil" from *blasphemountes* (Jas. 2:7).
5. "Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead" (4:5).
- a. Those who oppose New Testament Christianity and speak evil of Christians for their devotion to the cause of Christ will have to give an account of their behavior to God.
 - b. "Shall give" from *apodidomi*, render, to give again. It is the word translated "rendering" in the following verse. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:9).
 - c. "Account" from *logon*. Cf. Mt. 12:36; Lk. 16:2; Acts 19:20; Heb. 13:17.
 - d. "Ready to judge the quick and the dead."
 - (A) "Ready" from *hetoimos*, the one readily judging.
 - (B) *Zontas kai nekrous*, living and dead. Cf. 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:15.

6. "For this cause was the gospel preached to also to them who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the spirit" (4:6).
 - a. Because God will judge the living and the dead, then the gospel was preached to them who are dead.
 - b. *Euengelistiche*, first aorist passive indicative. The people heard the gospel while they were alive, but they are now dead.
 - c. Who are the dead? Are these people who are now dead but who were alive when the gospel was preached to them? It can hardly mean that men will have another chance after they are dead to hear the gospel.
 - (A) "It is appointed unto men once to die and then the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).
 - (B) "This present world" (Tit. 2:11-12).
 - d. "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh."
 - (A) All men whether good or bad will be judged according to the deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10).
 - (B) While these men lived they were subject to the same blasphemy and judgment.
 - e. "But live according to God in the spirit."
 - (A) They lived faithfully to God's word and thus lived "according to God in the spirit."
 - (B) They have the approval of God now; they live now.
- B. The demands of Christian discipleship (4:7-11).
 1. "But the end of all things is at hand: be therefore sober, and watch to the end" (4:7).
 - a. "End" from *telos* means end, goal, design.
 - b. "At hand" from *engiken* (*engizo*), draws near.
 - (A) How near?
 - (B) Same kind of language is used of the coming of the Lord's kingdom (Mt. 3:2).

- (C) Guy N. Woods thinks the expression is pointing to the destruction of Jerusalem—the end of the Jewish state (p. 111).
- c. "Sober" from *sophronesate*, be of a sound mind. *Sos*, sound, *phren*, mind.
 - d. "Watch" from *nepsate*, sometimes translated "be sober" (1 Pet. 5:8). "Be sober for your prayers" (RSV).
2. "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (4:8).
 - a. "Above all things" literally means "before all things." Cf. James 5:12.
 - b. "Being fervent" is a present active participle: "Keep on being fervent."
 - (A) "Fervent" from *ekteino*, to stretch out, to expend maximum effort.
 - (1) "Prayer was made without ceasing" (Acts 12:5).
 - (2) "Love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22).
 - (3) "Reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. 3:13).
 - (B) "Charity" from *agapen*, love.
 - c. "For charity (love) shall cover a multitude of sins."
 - (A) Literally, because love shall hide a multitude of sins.
 - (B) Love makes up, figuratively speaking, for a great number of weaknesses. Cf. James 5:19-20.
 3. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (4:5).
 - a. *Philoxenoi*, friendly to strangers.
 - (A) "Given to hospitality" (1 Tim. 3:2).
 - (B) "Lover of hospitality" (Tit. 1:8).
 - b. *Gongusmou*, without murmuring.

- (A) "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:14-15).
- (B) "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations" (Acts 6:1).
4. "As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good servants of the manifold grace of God" (4:10).
- a. "The gift." What gift?
- (A) "Gift" from *charisma*, *charizomai*, to give graciously.
- (1) Paul uses the word of the supernatural gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4, 9, 29-31; Rom. 12:6).
- (2) Was Peter speaking of ordinary gifts or miraculous gifts?
- (B) *Elaben*, aorist and points to a definite time when these gifts were received. Cf. Ephesians 4:8-13.
- b. "Even so minister the same one to another."
- (A) "Minister" from *diakonountes*, serving. They were to use them for the edification of the church.
- (B) 1 Corinthians 12 has much to say about the use and abuse of supernatural gifts.
- (C) Notice the emphasis on the expression: "One to another."
- c. "As good stewards of the manifold grace of God."
- (A) "Stewards" from *oikonomoi*, *oikos*, house,

and *nomos*, law, literally the law of the house. The word referred to house servants, or house managers. The stewards were servants over other servants.

(B) "Manifold" from *poikilos*, many colored, many splendored. Cf. 1 Peter 1:6; James 1:2.

5. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." (4:11).

a. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God."

(A) "If" is a condition of the first class, assumed to be true.

(B) "Oracles" from *logia*, teachings or words of gospel preachers and teachers.

(1) "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

(2) Paul applied the expression to the Old Testament. "Much in every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3:2).

(C) Both Old Testament prophets and New Testament preachers were to speak the very words God wanted them to preach.

b. "If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives."

(A) "Minister" from *diakonei*, serve. No specific area of ministry is mentioned in this verse,

but there are many different kinds mentioned in the Bible. First class.

(B) *Hes choregei hos theos*, which God supplies. *Choregos*, chorus leader.

(C) "Ability" from *ischuos*, strength. We can do nothing without the strength which God supplies.

c. "That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

(A) The purpose (*hina*) of our being faithful in every work is to glorify and to honor the name of Jesus Christ and our heavenly Father. Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

(B) Our work and worship must be in the name of Christ.

(C) Praise (*doxa*, glory) and dominion (*kratos*, might) are to be given to Christ. If Jesus Christ were not God manifest in the flesh, how could Peter use such language?

(D) *Eis tous aionas to aionon*, to the ages of the ages.

C. Suffering as Christians (4:12-19).

1. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (4:12).

a. "Think it not strange" from *xenizesthe*, "do not be surprised" (RSV). "Do not be amazed." *Xenos* means stranger. "Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Pet. 4:4).

b. "Fiery trial" *purosei pros peirasmon*, "fiery ordeal" (RSV).

(A) The same metaphor was used in 1:7: "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold which perishes,

though it be tried by fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

- (B) This is an appropriate description of the bitter persecution of the early church. It was a testing...trial.
- c. "As though some strange thing happened unto you."
 - (A) Persecution must not be considered foreign or alien to God's people in any age.
 - (B) If our Master suffered for his convictions, we should not expect less.
- 2. "But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy" (4:13).
 - a. "But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings."
 - (A) How can we rejoice when we have to suffer for the name of Christ? Do we rejoice because of the sufferings or in spite of them?
 - (B) "Partakers" from *koinoneite* (*koinoneo*), to share as a partner, to have something in common. This is the Greek word usually translated "fellowship."
 - b. "That, when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy."
 - (A) Literally, in the revelation (*apokalypsei*) of Christ's glory.
 - (B) The expression, "that you may be glad with exceeding joy," means that you may rejoice exulting.
- 3. "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you."
 - a. "If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are you."

- (A) "If" means condition of the first class, assumed to be true. This is not a hypothetical case.
- (B) "Reproached" from *oneidizesthe*, to cast into one's teeth.
- (1) The Greek is rendered "upbraid" (Mt. 11:20; Jas. 1:5); "revile" (Mt. 5:11). The most common translation is "reproach."
 - (2) The literal use of the word appears in the following verse. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Mt. 27:44).
 - (3) They were suffering because they had chosen to take the name of Christ and to live for him.
- (C) "Happy" is not a good translation of the Greek *makarioi*. "Blessed" or "fortunate" would be better.
- b. "For the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."
- (A) The definite article to is used two times although the noun *pneuma* (spirit) is used only one time. "The spirit of glory and the spirit of God."
- (1) "Spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit. Why would he be called "the Spirit of God?"
 - (2) "Glory" is the Old Testament sense of *shechinah* — the glory which preceded the Israelites in the wilderness of wandering.
- (B) "Rests" from *anapauetai*, to give rest, to refresh.
- (1) The quotation is from Isaiah 11:2.
 - (2) Bigg says that "he rests upon the Christian as the Shechinah rests upon

- the tabernacle" (A. T. Robertson, volume 5, p. 127).
- c. "On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."
 (A) Allen M. Stibbs thinks that this comment may have been added to explain "the paradox of Christians' glorifying Christ by faithfully enduring, for his sake and as his confessed followers, blasphemous reproaches directed at his name" (*The First General Epistle of Peter*, Tyndale NT Commentaries, p. 161).
4. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (4:15).
- a. "But let none of you suffer as a murderer."
 (A) Do not form the habit of suffering for evil doing.
 (B) "Murderer" from *phoneus*. Would abortion, assisted suicide and euthanasia fall into this category?
- b. "Or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters."
 (A) "Thief" from *kleptes*.
 (B) "Evil doer" from *kakopoios*, a generic word describing any kind of evil.
 (C) "Busybody" comes from *allogriepiskopos*, *allogrios*, belong to another, *episkopos*, overseer, inspector. At what point do we cease being busybodies and become our brother's keepers?
5. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (4:16).
- a. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."
 (A) The word "suffer" does not appear in

- the original in this verse, but it may be inferred from the preceding verse.
- (B) "Ashamed" from *aischuno*. The Greek can mean either stop being ashamed or do not get in the habit of being ashamed.
 - (C) It would be very difficult not to be ashamed under the circumstances faced by the early church.
- b. "But let him glorify God on this behalf."
 - (A) KJV based on this Greek reading: *en to merei touto*, in this respect or on this behalf.
 - (B) RV and RSV are based on: *en toi onomati toutoi*, "in this name" (RV) "but under that name let him glorify God" (RSV).
6. "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 who obey not the gospel of God" (4:17)?
- a. "For the time is come when that judgment must begin at the house of God."
 - (A) *Hoti ho kairos*, it is the season.
 - (B) What judgment did Peter have in mind? The judgment (*krima*) to which he refers must be the suffering which they were already experiencing. Such suffering has a sifting effect; the wheat is saved, the chaff is blown away.
 - (C) "The house of God" is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - b. "And if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of them who obey not the gospel of God?"
 - (A) The judgment of which Peter speaks had already begun; that would eliminate the final judgment from consideration.

- (B) There is great similarity between this language and that of Matthew 24:1-28.
- (C) The impending destruction of Jerusalem would fit the language here.
- (D) What shall the destiny (*telos*) of those not obeying (*apeithounton*) the gospel (*euangellio*)?
- (1) Christians would have great difficulty surviving the persecution.
- (2) Others would not escape. "And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shorted" (Mt. 24:22).
7. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear" (4:18)?
- a. This verse could not apply to the final salvation of God's children. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: and so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10-11).
- b. "Scarcely" from *molis*, with great difficulty.
- (A) "And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work (literally, we were able with great difficulty) to get the boat" (Acts 27:16).
- (B) "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die" (Rom. 5:7).
- c. "Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?"
- (A) There is only one article (*ho*) for both nouns: ungodly and sinner – an ungodly man who is a sinner.

- (B) "Ungodly" from *asebes*, without reverence, impious.
- (C) "Sinner" from *harmatolos*, one who misses the mark.
- (D) "Appear" from *phaneitai*, to shine.
8. "Wherefore let them who suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (4:19).
- a. The Christians who suffer because he is a faithful child of God "suffers according to the will of God." Suffering for wrongdoing is a reproach on the name of Christ.
- b. "Commit" from *paraththesthosan*, present middle imperative third person plural, "keep on committing their souls to."
- (A) *Paratithemi*, a banking figure, to deposit.
- (B) "And the things which you have heard of me among many faithful witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
- (C) "Entrust their souls" (RSV).
- c. Has God ever disappointed those who put their trust in him?

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 Peter 4

- 1 Define the following: "lasciviousness," "revellings" and "banqueting."
- 2 Do the people of the world think Christians are strange? Why?
- 3 Discuss the expression: "the quick and the dead."
- 4 How could the gospel be preached "to them who are dead?"
- 5 Does the expression, "the end of all things," predict the end of the age? If not, why not?
- 6 What is the meaning of hospitality?
- 7 Explain the term: "the oracles of God."
- 8 Should Christians expect opposition from the world?
- 9 Discuss: "If any man suffer as a Christian."

Chapter 5

The Epistle Of 1 Peter

CHAPTER 5

- A. The duties of elders of the Lord's church (5:1-4).
1. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed" (5:1).
 - a. "Elders" from *presbuteros*. What is implied by the term? An elder has to be older, but just because a man is older does not make him an elder in the biblical sense.
 - b. "I exhort" from *parakalo*, I urge, admonish, encourage. The same word is also translated "warn."
 - c. "Who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ."
 - (A) This verse tells us considerably about Peter. This is very strong evidence that the apostle Peter wrote the book of 1 Peter, although it is not conclusive evidence.
 - (B) *Sunpresbuteros*, a fellow elder, an elder along with (*sun*) other elders.
 - (C) "Witness" from *martus*.
 - d. "And also a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed."
 - (A) "Partaker" from *koinonos*, sharer, "partner" (2 Cor. 8:23), "companions" (Heb. 10:33).
 - (B) The glory "about to be" (*mellouses*).
 - (C) "Revealed" from *apokaluptesthai*, uncovered, unveiled.
 2. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint,

but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (5:2).

- a. "Feed" comes from the Greek *poimante*, shepherd (verb).
 - (A) Jesus told Peter, "Feed my sheep" (*poimaine ta probata*) (John 21:16).
 - (B) Paul urged the Ephesian elders to "feed the church of God which he purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).
 - b. "Flock" from *poimnion*, *poimen* (shepherd).
 - c. "Among you" limits the responsibilities and authority of elders of the Lord's church.
 - d. "Taking the oversight" from *episkopountes*, exercising.
 - (A) This verb is a part of the same word translated "bishop" (*episkopos*).
 - (B) "Tend the flock of God which is your charge" (RSV).
 - e. "Constraint" from *anagastos*, not forcing it. This is the only use of this Greek word in the New Testament.
 - f. "Willingly" from *hekousios* – the opposite of "constraint."
 - g. "Filthy lucre" from *aischrokerdos*, base gain. *Aischros*, base or shameful, *kerdos*, gain. "What things were gain for me" (Phil. 3:7).
 - h. "Ready mind" from *prothumos*, readily – an adverb.
3. "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (5:3).
- a. *Katakurieuontes*, exercising lordship.
 - (A) "Not domineering" (RSV).
 - (B) "Not lording it over."
 - (C) "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercised dominion over them,

- and they that are great exercise authority upon them" (Mt. 20:25).
- b. "Heritage" from *kleron*, possessions. The charge allotted to you.
 - c. "Being" from *ginomenoi*, becoming.
 - d. *Tupoi*, patterns, examples, types, models.
4. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you shall receive the crown of glory which fades not away" (5:4).
 - a. *Archipoimenos*, chief shepherd. Elders of the Lord's church are undershepherds.
 - b. "Shall appear" from *phanerothentos*, having been manifested.
 - c. "You shall receive" from *komizo*, shall obtain.
 - d. The crown composed of glory. The unfading crown, *amarantinon tes doxes stephanon*. "Unfading" as in the unfading of a flower; not subject to withering.
- B. Duties of members to elders. "Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble" (5:5).
1. *Neoteroi*, younger ones. Is this a reference to age or to the elder-member relationship? Dr. Robertson says it refers to age.
 2. *Hupotasso*, to arrange or to array under – the same word used in reference to wives (1 Pet. 3:1).
 3. *Presbuterois*, elder ones. Would Peter use the same word in two different senses in such close proximity – verses 1 and 5?
 4. Does the expression, "be subject to one another" teach mutual submission? There are many areas of subjection but mutual submission is not a scriptural position (Eph. 5:21ff.).
 5. "Be clothed with humility."
 - a. *Engkombosasthe*, *en*, in, and *kombos*, knot,

- like the knot of a girdle. *Engkomboma* was the white scarf or apron worn by slaves.
- b. Peter may have been thinking of the towel with which Jesus girded himself when he taught his disciples about humility (John 13:4ff.).
6. "Resists" from *antitasso*, sets himself against. The word is translated "opposed themselves" (Acts 18:6) and "resists" (Rom. 13:2; Jas. 4:6; 5:6). Its literal meaning is to array against.
 7. *Huperephanois*, *huper*, above, *phainomai*, to appear, to be manifest. This Greek word is usually translated "proud." Modern language: "Stuck-up folks."
 8. "Gives grace" (*charin*) to the humble. Cf. James 4:6. The Lord keeps on giving grace to the humble.
- C. Humility and watchfulness (5:6-9).
1. "Humble yourselves therefore under the might hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (5:6).
 - a. *Tapeinothete*, be humbled. Because God keeps on giving grace to the humble, we are to keep on being humbled under the mighty hand of God.
 - b. "Mighty" from *krataian*, strong.
 - c. *Hupsoo*, exalt.
 - (A) "Whoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Lk. 14:11).
 - (B) Christ is our example in this respect (Phil. 2:9-11).
 2. "Casting all your care upon him; for he cares for you" (5:7).
 - a. "Casting" from *epiripsantes*, to throw upon. Used of casting garments on the colt (Lk. 19:35). "Having cast upon him."
 - b. *Merimna*, worries, anxieties, burdens.

- (A) Mt. 6:25-34; Phil. 4:5-7.
 (B) "Cares, riches and pleasures" (Lk. 8:14).
- c. *Hoti auto melei peri humon*, because with him there is a care about you.
3. "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour" (5:8).
- a. "Be sober" from *nepsate*, used metaphorically of sober mindedness. But how could one be sober minded if he is not sober?
- b. "Be vigilant" from *gregoresate*, watchful, to be awake.
- c. "Adversary" from *antidikos*, opponent in a lawsuit.
- d. "Devil" from *diabolos*, slanderer.
- e. *Hos oruomenos leon*, as a roaring lion.
 (A) *Oruomai*, to howl like a wolf, dog or lion.
 (B) In what respects is the devil like a roaring lion?
- f. "Walks about" from *peripatei*, constantly on the go to win souls for his kingdom.
- g. "Seeking whom he may devour."
 (A) "Seeking" from *zeton*, constantly seeking.
 (B) Do we work as incessantly and energetically as the devil does?
 (C) "May devour" from *katapiein*, *katapino*, to drink down, to gulp down, to swallow up.
4. "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren who are in the world" (5:9).
- a. "Resist" from *antithistemi*, to stand against. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Jas. 4:7).
- b. "Stedfast" from *stereoï*, firm, adjective for a firm foundation.
- c. *Oida*, knowing, having sure knowledge.

- d. "Afflictions" from *pathematon*, sufferings, "the same experience of suffering" (RSV).
 - e. "Are accomplished" from *epiteleisthai*, are being accomplished. The same Greek word is translated "perfecting" (2 Cor. 7:1).
 - f. "Your brethren," the brotherhood.
 - g. "In the world" seemingly refers to other Christians throughout the world who are also suffering for the cause of Christ.
- D. Concluding assurance and greetings (5:10-14).
1. "But the God of all grace, who has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (5:10).
 - a. "The God of all grace" is similar to *poikiles charitos theou*, the variegated grace of God (1 Pet. 4:10).
 - b. "Has called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus."
 - (A) How are men called to God's glory?
 - (B) "In Christ Jesus" is a very significant phrase. Cf. Ephesians 1:3-10.
 - c. "Suffered" from *pathontas*, having suffered.
 - (A) How long is "a while?"
 - (B) Regardless of the length of our suffering in the world, it is short compared to eternity.
 - d. "Perfect" from *kartartisai*, make perfect in the sense of mending that which was broken. The word is used of the mending of nets (Mt. 4:21), perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10), "restore" (Gal. 6:1), the worlds were framed (Heb. 11:3).
 - e. "Stablish" from *sterixai*. "He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk. 9:51).

- f. "Strengthen" from *sthenosei*: that he may strengthen you. *Hapax*.
- g. "Settle" from *themliosai*, may be found you.
- 2. "To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (5:11).
 - a. God deserves all the praise, honor and glory we can bestow upon him.
 - b. *Kratos*, strength, rather than dominion.
- 3. "By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you as I suppose, I have written unto you briefly and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein you stand" (5:12).
 - a. Peter may have used Silas as a stenographer and the bearer of this epistle.
 - (A) Paul probably used a stenographer in writing some of his epistles (Gal. 6:11-18; 2 Thess. 3:17).
 - (B) But there is no indication Silas actually had any part in the writing of the letter.
 - b. "As I suppose" from *hos logizomai*, as I account him. Peter counted Silas a faithful brother.
 - c. "I have written." Epistolary aorist. "I have written in this letter."
 - d. "Briefly" from *oligon*, in a few words.
 - e. The Greek reads: Beseeching and testifying (*parakalon kai epimarturon*).
- 4. "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, salutes you; and so does Mark my son" (5:13).
 - a. What does "the church that is at Babylon" mean?
 - (A) A. T. Robertson. "Either actual Babylon or, as most likely, mystical Babylon (Rome) as in the Apocalypse" (volume 6, p. 135).
 - (B) Stibbs points out that the word "church" does not appear in the original. It could

read, "She who is in Babylon," and could refer to Peter's wife (p. 176). This seems rather far-fetched to me.

(C) Guy N. Woods agrees with Stibbs (p. 134).

- b. *He sukeklete*, co-elect woman may refer to Peter's wife (Robertson, volume 6, p. 135). *Hapax*.
 - c. Mark almost certainly refers to John Mark, the author of the book of Mark.
5. "Greet one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen" (5:14).
- a. *En philemati agapes*. "The abuse of this custom led to its confinement to men with men and women with women and to its final abandonment" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 136).
 - b. *En christoi*, in Christ.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 Peter 5

- 1 The apostle Peter was also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Discuss his responsibilities in both of these areas.
- 2 Elders are to feed the flock. What is involved in feeding the flock?
- 3 Explain: "Not by constraint, but willingly."
- 4 Who is the chief Shepherd?
- 5 How are the youngest members of the congregation to respond to the elders?
- 6 Discuss: "Casting all your cares upon him; for he cares for you."
- 7 Define: "sober" and "vigilant."
- 8 Why must Christians always be vigilant?
- 9 Christians must resist the devil. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).
- 10 Define: perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle.
- 11 Silas may have served as a stenographer for Peter. It is likely that Paul used a stenographer.
- 12 "The church that is at Babylon" is a different expression to understand. What are some of the possibilities?
- 13 Has the "kiss of charity" been replaced in our culture with a handshake?
- 14 According to A. T. Robertson, what may have been the reason the "kiss of charity" ceased to be a common practice?

2 Peter

Introduction To

The Epistle Of 2 Peter

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Theme: True knowledge in the presence of false teachers and false teachings.
 - 1. Some form of the word "knowledge" (*ginosko*) appears sixteen (16) times in this short epistle. Six times the intensified form of the word (*epignosko*) is used. The intensified form of the word means sure knowledge, full knowledge.
 - 2. Salvation in Christ is the better knowledge.
- B. Authorship.
 - 1. Internal evidence for Petrine authorship.
 - a. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure mind by way of remembrance" (2 Pet. 3:1).
 - b. Introduction to the epistle. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:1).
 - c. Some manuscripts spell Peter's name Symeon other, Simon. Both names mean "rock."
 - 2. External evidence.
 - a. 2 Peter is the poorest attested book in the New Testament.
 - (A) Clement of Alexandria may have had echoes in his writings. His writings are now lost. He lived in the middle of the second century.
 - (B) **Apocalypse of Peter** (2nd century) may quote this letter.
 - (C) It is not in the Muratorian fragment.

- (D) Origen says that Peter left one letter and another doubtful one. In Origen's view, 2 Peter was a questionable epistle.
 - (E) **Bodmer P72** (third century) may also quote this letter.
 - (F) Eusebius, the highly respected ancient church historian, places it in the *antilegomena* (disputed books).
 - (G) Jerome had some doubts about the book.
 - (H) It was accepted by Augustine (354-430 A.D.), bishop of Hippo in North Africa, by Athanasius (c. 296-373), bishop of Alexandria and a Greek theologian, and by the 2nd Council of Carthage (in the 300s after Christ).
- b. What caused 2 Peter to be doubted?
 - (A) Internal evidence makes Peter the author (2 Pet. 3:1).
 - (B) The author was an eyewitness at the holy mount (2 Pet. 1:18).
 - (C) He speaks of "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Pet. 3:15).
 - c. What would be the motivation for him to write under an false name (pseudonymity)?
 - (A) No romance.
 - (B) No strange doctrine.
 - (C) No anachronisms (that is, events given the wrong date).
 - (D) There is no motive for him to have written under Peter's name.
 - d. Reasons critics give for not accepting Petrine authorship.
 - (A) Peter's references to Paul's writings. Paul's writings had not been collected. Besides, we do not know when Paul's letters were collected.
 - (B) Some critics claim that the author had

some knowledge of the gospels which had not been written that early.

- (C) Silence in the second century concerning 2 Peter.
- (D) The relationship of 2 Peter and Jude. Did Peter borrow from Jude or Jude from 2 Peter? Parallels in the books:
 - (1) Angels (2:11) made clearer in Jude.
 - (2) Stars (2:17) in Jude 13. Other parallels will be mentioned as we continue our study.
- (E) What was the heresy Peter had in mind when he wrote this epistle? Some think it was gnosticism, but that false doctrine did not arise in any influential way until the second century. If the letter came from the first century, Peter could not have written it.
- (F) There is no evidence that the early church wrote in the apostle Peter's name. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) held the book to be "sacred and canonical."

C. Date.

1. Authorship and date are interrelated. If the book were written in the second century, Peter did not write it.
2. A. M. Hunter dated the book at 150 A.D.
3. Some Roman Catholic scholars claim to have found fragments of 2 Peter in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They date it at about 135 A.D. Few scholars accept their view.
4. We readily agree that the citations are late. We cannot give an exact date for the letter.

D. Style.

1. Many scholars assert that 2 Peter is very poor Greek as compared to 1 Peter. First Peter is beautiful Greek.

2. There are 699 words in Peter's letters; 369 are peculiar to 1 Peter; 230 peculiar to 2 Peter; 33 no where else in the New Testament.
 3. Many people think 2 Peter is better in the translation than in the original.
- E. Audience.
1. "To them who have obtained like precious faith with us" (1:1).
 2. Whoever needed warning about false teachers (2:1-22; 3:1). Antinomianism (literally, against law) seems to be a major problem.
 3. Some were questioning the Lord's second coming. There are scholars who think this false teaching called forth the epistle.
 4. 2 Peter's relationship to Jude.
 - a. 25 verses in Jude; 19 of these are found in some form in 2 Peter.
 - b. Some seem to believe that for Peter the false teachers were in the future; for Jude they were present.
 - c. 2 Peter differs from Jude in one important particular; no mention of the burial of Moses.
- F. Contents of 2 Peter.
1. Authority of Peter's teaching.
 - a. Christians are to develop (1:5-11). They must grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18).
 - b. If we do not grow, we are nearsighted. We have forgotten that we were purged from our old sins.
 - c. Those who grow have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.
 2. Qualifications.
 - a. The author claims first hand knowledge. "We were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (1:12-21).
 - b. "We have not followed cunningly devised

- fables (*mythoi*) (1:16).
- c. We heard the prophetic word (1:20).
 - d. The prophets of God were "borne" (*phero*: to carry, to bear) in the message they delivered. The same Greek word is used of a ship that is driven by the wind. KJV uses the word "moved" (1:21).

Chapter 1

The Epistle Of 2 Peter

CHAPTER 1

A. Introduction and greeting (1:1-2).

1. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (1:1).

a. "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ."

(A) Some manuscripts, namely Sinaiticus and Alexandinus, use Symeon rather than Simon. Most Greek scholars seem to prefer Symeon.

(B) That form of Peter's name is used in Acts 15:14.

(C) According to A. T. Robertson, the same man is called by both names (1 Macc. 2:3, 65) (Volume 6, p. 147).

b. "To them who have obtained like precious faith with us."

(A) *Tois lachousin, lagchano*, to obtain by lot (Lk. 1:9).

(B) *Isotimon, isos*, equal, and *time*, honor, precious. The faith of these Christians was like in honor the faith of the apostle Peter's.

(C) Can we obtain like precious faith? How do we obtain that faith (Rom. 10:17)?

c. "Through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

(A) The Greek pronoun is *en* (in) rather than *dia* (through).

- (B) "Righteousness" in this context is God's fairness in dealing with all men. With God there is no respect of persons (Acts 10:34-35).
- (C) In Romans 1:16-17, "the righteousness of God," refers to God's way of making men righteous. Dr. A. T. Robertson calls it a "God kind of righteousness" (volume 4, p. 327).
2. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (1:2).
- a. Peter's prayer is that his brethren might fully enjoy grace and peace. "Multiply" from *plethuntheie*, *plethuno*, enjoying fulness.
- b. "Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."
- (A) "Knowledge" from *epignosei*. *Epi* means additional, full. This is an intensified form of the word.
- (B) All the knowledge man needs to become a Christian and to go to heaven he can obtain from God and Christ (Col. 2:3).
- (C) There is no true knowledge of God's will apart from his revelation in Jesus Christ.
- B. The Christian's privileges (1:3-4).
1. "According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue" (1:3).
- a. "According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness."
- (A) *Hos*, as, seeing that.
- (B) *Theias dunameos*. *Dunameos* from the same word translated "power" in Romans 1:16.

- (C) *Dedoremenes*, has given or granted, from *dorea*, gift.
- (D) God has given unto us all things (*panta*) relating to life (*zoen*) and godliness (*eusebeian*: piety).
 - (1) If God has given "all things," why do we need the teachings of Joseph Smith, Mary Baker Eddy and Pat Boone? Pat Boone wrote: "The word, no matter how well it is preached, will not get the job done by itself" (**Dr. Balaam's Talking Mule**). Van Nuys, CA: Son-Rise Books, 1974, p. 68).
 - (2) This expression binds in a positive way our need to preach the gospel and only the gospel.
- b. "Through the knowledge of him who has called us to his glory and virtue."
 - (A) We cannot and must not overlook Peter's continuing emphasis on knowledge. Peter taught that we can and must know the will of God.
 - (B) God has called us to glory and virtue.
 - (1) How does he call? "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14).
 - (2) He has called us to "glory" (*doze*) and "virtue" (*aretas*).
- 2. "Whereby are given us exceeding great and precious promises that by these you might be

partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1:4).

a. "Whereby are given us exceeding great and precious promises."

(A) "Whereby" from *di' hon*, through which. Peter seems to mean "glory and virtue."

(B) "Given" from *dedoretai*, he has granted.

(C) "Great" from *megista*, superlative, the greatest.

(D) "Precious" from *timia*, precious faith (1 Pet. 1:1). The word can also be translated "costly" and "dear." Gamaliel was "had in reputation" (Acts 5:34).

b. "That by these you might be partakers of the divine nature."

(A) "Through these" (*dia touton*), that is, the great and most precious promises we might be partakers of the divine nature.

(B) *Koinonoi*, sharers. This is the same word rendered fellowship.

(C) "You may become" (*genesthe*) rather than "you might be."

(D) *Theias phuseos*, the divine nature. Does that mean we become God, as many New Agers teach?

(1) "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

(2) "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him" (Col. 3:10).

- c. "Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
 (A) "Having escaped" from *apophugontes*, *apo*, from, *pheugo*, to flee, to escape.
 (B) *En epithumia*, in lusts. How do we explain the corruption that is in the world? In lusts.
- C. Progress in faith (1:5-11).
1. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge" (1:5).
- a. "And beside this, giving all diligence."
 (A) "For this very reason."
 (B) Because of our being citizens of the kingdom of heaven and enjoying all the great and precious promises of the gospel, we ought to give diligence.
 (C) "Give diligence" from *spouden pasan*, with all haste. Make maximum effort. The Greek is translated "business" (Rom. 12:11); "carefulness" (2 Cor. 7:11); "forwardness" (2 Cor. 8:8); "earnest care" (2 Cor. 8:16).
 (D) "Make every effort to supplement your faith" (RSV).
- b. "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge."
 (A) Is Peter teaching that faith is the foundation on which we build for time and for eternity?
 (B) "Add" from *epichoregesate*, supply; *epi*, upon, and *choregeo*, to lead, from which we get our term "chorus leader."
 (C) "Virtue" from *areten*, moral power, moral energy, vigor of soul.
 (D) "Knowledge" from *gnosin*, insight, understanding.
2. "And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness" (1:6).

- a. "Temperance" from *egkrateian*, self-control. *En*, in, *kratos*, strong, holding oneself in. *Akrasin*, incontinence (1 Cor. 7:5).
 - b. "Patience" from *hupomone*, to remain under, to endure. In the KJV the word is almost always translated "patience," but "endurance" is a better translation. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). The word is used thirty-two times in the New Testament. The verb form is almost always translated "endure." "But he who shall endure to the end shall be saved" (Mt. 24:13).
 - c. "Godliness" from *eusebeian*, *eu*, well, *sebomai*, to worship. "But godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).
3. "And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love" (1:7).
 - a. "Brotherly kindness" from *philadelphian*, brotherly love. This expression is used six times in the New Testament. "Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1). *Philos*, love, and *adelphos*, brother.
 - b. "Love" from *agapen*, the kind of love God has for fallen men. To quote from a country song. "It is a love without end, Amen."
 - (A) The verb *agapao* is used 142 times in the New Testament.
 - (B) The noun form, *agape*, 116 times.
 - (C) The noun *agapetos*, beloved, is used sixty-two times.
 - (D) The Bible does not define the word love, but it does tell us how love behaves (1 Cor. 13:1-8).
 4. "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:8).

- a. "For if these things be in you, and abound."
 (A) Dr. A. T. Robertson calls these verbs "present active circumstantial (or conditional) participles" (volume 6, p. 151).
 (B) "If these things are yours (*tauta gar humin huparchonta*)."
 (1) *Huparcho*, existing for you or in you.
 (2) We must remember that the apostle Peter is writing to Christians—not to unbelievers.
 (C) "Abounding" from *pleonazonta*. "And the Lord make you to increase (*pleonasai*) and abound (*perisseusai*) in your love toward one another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (1 Thess. 3:12).
- b. "They make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful."
 (A) If these Christians graces are not in you, will you be alright anyway?
 (B) "Make you" from *kathistesin*, keep you (RSV).
 (C) "Barren" from *argous*, idle. The word is translated "idle" six times in the New Testament. It is rendered "slow" (Tit. 1:12) and "barren" here in 2 Peter.
 (D) "Unfruitful" from *akarpous*. "He also who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word; and the care of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful" (Mt. 31:22). The Greek is always translated "unfruitful" except in Jude 12 ("without fruit").
- c. "In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 (A) The word for "knowledge" (*epignosin*) means full knowledge.
 (B) Christians must strive for full knowledge,

- but they cannot do so unless they add the graces mentioned in this chapter.
- (C) Is it possible that knowledge might be detrimental for some? "Knowledge puffs up" (1 Cor. 8:1).
5. "But he who lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (1:9).
- a. "But he who lacks these things is blind."
- (A) Do you get the impression that it does not really matter if one does not cultivate the Christian graces?
- (B) Literally, "for with whom are not present these things."
- (C) "Blind" from *tuphlos*, the root word meaning to burn or to smoke.
- (D) "Cannot see afar off" from *mupazon*, short sighted, seeing only what is near.
- (1) Our word "*myopia*" means to close the eyes and is derived from this Greek word.
- (2) The word involved blinking the eyes in order to see. Have you ever heard the expression, "He cannot see past his nose."
- (E) "Having received forgetfulness" (*lethen labon*).
- (F) "Purged" from *katharismou*, catharsis. The cleansing is made available through the sacrifice of Christ's blood. "For Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7). When does the cleansing take place? (1 Pet. 1:22; Rom. 6:17-18).
- b. How can this verse be harmonized with the doctrine of once in grace always in grace?
6. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if

you do these things, you shall never fall" (1:10).

a. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

(A) "Wherefore" refers to the argument presented in verses 5-9.

(B) "Give diligence" from *mallon spoudasate*, give the more diligence, "Be more zealous" (RSV).

(C) "Make" from *poieisthai*, to do. This is the verb almost always translated "do."

(D) "Calling" from *klesin* (*kalleo*). How are men and women called into God's service? We are called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13-14).

(E) "Election" from *eklogen*, *eklektos*. Disagreement does not generally arise over whether we are elected, but how. Are we unconditionally elected, as most Calvinists teach? We are elected "in Christ." But how do we get into Christ?

(F) "Sure" from *bebaian*, steadfast. If we must make our calling and election sure, is it possible it might not be sure?

b. "For if you do these things, you shall never fall."

(A) If we fail to do them, have we not already fallen? We would be barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(B) "Doing" is a present active circumstantial (or conditional) participle of *poieo*. Remember that some form of the Greek *poieo* is used 576 times in the New Testament.

(C) *Ou me ptaisete pote*, a strong double

negative of *ptaio*, to stumble, to fall, (Jas. 2:10; 3:2).

(D) If the language of this verse has any meaning, it shows the danger of failing to add the Christian graces.

b. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (1:11).

(A) "An entrance" from *eisodos*, *eis*, into, *hodos*, a way.

(B) "Shall be ministered" from *epichoregethesetai*, shall be supplied. "You supply the virtues above and God will supply the entrance" (Robertson, volume 5, p. 153). Does that sound like salvation by grace alone through faith alone?

(C) "Abundantly" from *plousios*, richly.

(D) "Everlasting kingdom" from *eis ten aionion basileian*. In this verse, the word "kingdom" extends beyond the church to include all the redeemed of all the ages.

D. The source of knowledge about God and his will (1:12-21).

1. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and are established in the present truth" (1:12).

a. "Where I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things."

(A) Because of the constant need to work for the Lord, to add the Christian graces, Peter wanted to keep reminding the early Christians of the need. Should not preachers and other teachers do the same in our day?

(B) "I will not be negligent" from *meleso*, I

- will not neglect. "I shall be ready" (RV).
 "I intend always to remind you."
- b. "Though you know them, and are established in the present truth."
 (A) Why should preachers bother to speak on topics members of the church already know?
 (B) "Although knowing them" from *kaiper eidotas*. The word "knowing" in this verse means having full knowledge.
 (C) "Are established" from *esterigmenous (sterizo)*. This verb means to strengthen, fixed. "When you are converted, strengthen your brethren" (Lk. 22:32).
 (D) "Present truth" is not intended as a contrast between present and past truth. The expression literally means the truth that is already in you (*en te parouse aletheia*). "In the truth that you have" (RSV). Many people may know the truth, but are not firmly established in it.
2. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (1:13).
 a. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle."
 (A) "I think it meet" from *dikaion de hegoumai*, right I esteem it. "I think it is appropriate." Peter considered it his duty to keep on reminding people of their duties.
 (B) "So long as" from *eph' hoson*. It does not appear as if Peter intended to retire from preaching.
 (C) "Tabernacle" from *skenomati*, his literal body. "His earthly dwelling."
 b. "To stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

- (A) "Stir you" from *diegeirein*, to keep on rousing you. The word can also be translated "awake" (Mk. 4:38).
- (B) "By way of reminding you" (*hupomnesei*).
3. "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me" (1:14).
- a. "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle."
- (A) "Having knowledge" (*eidos*), full assurance.
- (B) "The putting off of my tabernacle comes swiftly" (RV).
- (1) If that translation is correct, Peter is saying that when his death comes it will be speedy.
- (2) *Tachine estin*, from *tachus* meaning sudden. Our word "tachometer" comes from this Greek word.
- b. "Even as our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me."
- (A) "Shown me" from *edelosen moi*, signified unto me.
- (B) *Deloo* means to show, to signify. Cf. John 21:18ff.
4. "Moreover I will endeavor that you may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance" (1:15).
- a. "Moreover" from *hekastote*, at every time.
- b. "I will endeavor" from *spoudaso*, I will be diligent. "I will see to it" (RSV).
- c. "That you may be able" from *echein humas*, that you may have it in your power.
- d. "After my decease" from *meta ten emen exodon*, after my decease (exodus).
- e. "To have these things always in remembrance" from *ten touton mnemen poieisthai*,

to bring these things to remembrance. Does this not teach that Peter would provide these great truths in a permanent form, that is, in writing? Were Peter's spoken words and his written words inerrantly inspired? If they were not, how can we depend on anything he said?

5. "For we have not following cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (1:16).
 - a. "For we have not following cunningly devised fables."
 - (A) "Followed" from *exakolouthesantes* (*exakolouthéo*), to follow out, to follow out to the end.
 - (B) "Cunningly devised" from *sophizo*, to play the sophist, to invent cleverly. "Cleverly devised" (NASB, ESV, McCord). "It was not mere stories of fancy that we followed" (Williams).
 - (C) "Fables" from *muthois* (myths). The word is used five times in the New Testament and is always rendered "fables" (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:4).
 - (1) Liberal theologians believe that many Bible stories are mythological, especially the first eleven chapters of Genesis: the creation story, the fall of man, the flood, etc.). If Jesus knew the Old Testament stories were mythological, why did he not correct them? If he did not know, how can we refer to him as "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6)?
 - (2) Can fables teach good lessons? The Old Testament stories are sometimes

called "pious frauds." But even if they are pious, are they still not frauds?

- b. "When we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- (A) *Egnorismanen*, we made known. This is one of the words that emphasize knowledge.
 - (B) "Power" from *dunamin*, the word used of the "power of God" in the gospel (Rom. 1:16).
 - (C) The word "coming" is from *parousian* and means presence. The word means one who comes and remains, like a king visiting his subjects. The word is translated "presence" (2 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:12), but otherwise rendered "coming." It is often used of the Lord's second coming. "Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3:4)?
 - (D) If what Christ and his apostles taught about his second coming is a myth, what is the basis of our hope?
- c. "But we were eyewitnesses of his coming."
- (A) If the apostles were not eyewitnesses of our Lord's transfiguration, they were among the greatest deceivers the world has ever known. And yet their words have done more to change lives for good than all other philosophies or theologies.
 - (B) The Greek reads "having become eyewitnesses."
 - (C) "Majesty" means splendor, magnificence. A careful reading of the actual account of the transfiguration will provide insight into why the inspired writer used the word "majesty." It is one of the most

majestic scenes in all of God's book (Mt. 17:1-13).

- (D) Over and over the apostle John informs us that he was present when many of the great miracles were performed. The miracles were done in the presence of the disciples (John 20:30-31). Cf. 1 John 1:1-4.
6. "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (1:17).
- a. "For he received from God the Father honor and glory."
- (A) There is no doubt Peter was referring to the events on the mount of transfiguration (Mt. 17:1-13).
- (B) The tense of the verb reads "Jesus, having received honor and glory."
- (C) "Honor" (*timen*: precious) and "glory" (*doxan*).
- b. "When there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory."
- (A) "When there came" literally reads "having been brought," from *phero*, to bear or to carry.
- (B) "Voice" from *phones*, sound.
- (C) Majestic glory. The language reminds one of the shekinah glory of the old covenant.
- c. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- (A) God the Father recognizes and approves of God the Son. God also recognizes him when Christ was baptized (Mt. 3:17). What greater accreditation could be found than that of God the Father? God also

approved Jesus by the great works the Father gave him to do (Acts 2:22). The word "approved" can also be rendered "attested" (McCord, ESV, NASB) and "accredited" (Williams).

- (B) "This is my beloved Son." God adds in the gospel account: "Hear him." Moses and the prophets are no longer binding. We are to hear the Son (Heb. 1:1-2).
- (C) Was Jesus God's Son while he lived on earth? What did Paul mean when he said that Jesus "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7)?
 - (1) While he lived on earth, did he have all the attributes of God?
 - (2) What does the word "form" mean in Philippians 2?
 - (3) "For in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). The fulness of the Godhead makes its home in Jesus Christ. There has never been a time when Jesus was not God. How can God cease being God or become more God?
 - (4) The Mormons teach that God was once a man. He progressed until he became God. We too shall become gods.
- d. "In whom I have found delight." The verb "suggests the good pleasure of God alighting and remaining on Jesus" (Michael Green, **Tyndale Commentaries**, p. 84).
- 7. "And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (1:18).
 - a. "And this voice which came from heaven we heard."

- (A) The voice was the one which announced: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The voice spoke audibly so that the apostles heard. Not only do we have eyewitnesses, we also have ear-witnesses. Notice the empirical evidence, that is, evidence discernible by the senses.
 - (B) The verb (*ekrousamen*, first aorist indicative) spells out a definite experience—not an imaginary event. They saw and they heard.
 - (C) Peter said the voice was brought (*enechtheisan*) from heaven.
- b. "When we were with him in the holy mount."
- (A) Jesus had taken Peter, James and John with him to the mount.
 - (B) Peter refers to the mount as being "holy." What made it holy? It was the presence of Christ and the events that transpired that day. There was nothing inherently holy about the mountain.
8. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and day star arises in your hearts" (1:19).
- a. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy."
 - (A) More sure than what?
 - (1) RV and RSV are probably more correct than the KJV. "We have a prophetic word made more sure." The prophetic word was made more sure by the events on the mount of transfiguration.
 - (2) Fulfilled prophecy is an unanswerable argument for the inspiration of

scripture and for the deity of Christ. The events on the mount made that evidence more sure.

- (3) Literally, the prophetic word. The fulfillment of prophecy never loses its power and relevancy.
- b. "Whereunto you do well that you take heed."
(A) *Ho*, to which. We must take heed unto the more sure word of prophecy.
(B) We do well when we take heed to the word of God. *Kalos*, well, *poieite*, do. Is Peter teaching that we must "do" something and that we are blessed if we do?
(C) "Take heed" from *prosechontes*, literally, "holding your mind upon." James 1:21-25 provides a great commentary on this concept.
- c. "As unto a light that shines in a dark place."
(A) The word of prophecy is like a light shining in a dark place.
(B) The expression, "dark place," means an obscure place. The adjective means parched, squalid, dirty, dark, murky (A. T. Robertson, volume 6, p. 158). This is an apt description of the world without Christ (Eph. 2:1-3, 11-12).
- d. "Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."
(A) The day dawns when Christ comes into our hearts. We then know how sinful we are and how much we need a Savior.
(B) The day star almost certainly refers to Christ. As the morning star heralds the coming of the day, Jesus Christ heralds a new day of light, joy and peace.
(C) "Wherefore he says, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and

- Christ shall give you light" (Eph. 5:14).
9. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation" (1:20).
 - a. "First of all you must understand this" (RSV).
 - b. "Recognize this truth to be of utmost importance" (Green, 89).
 - c. Literally, "no prophecy comes or springs from one's own unloosing."
 - (A) Prophecy does not originate with man. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel did not decide on their own to write their books. They were guided and superintended by God's Holy Spirit.
 - (B) "Private" from *idias*, its own.
 - (1) The noun does not appear elsewhere in the Bible, but in the papyri (documents contemporary with the New Testament), the word means "the sense of solution or even the discharge of a debt" (A. T. Robertson, volume 6, p. 159).
 - (2) The verb (*epiluo*) means "to unloose, to untie, to release." The word is translated "expounded" (Mk. 4:34).
 - (3) The Greek word has absolutely nothing to do with interpretation.
 - (4) Our word "hermeneutics" comes from the Greek *hermeneia* (verb *hermeneuo*). "The interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:10).
 10. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (1:21).
 - a. The preceding verse tells us how the prophecy of scripture did not come—by the prophet's own untying or unloosing—and

this verse tells us how it did come—"holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

- b. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."
 - (A) A. T. Robertson: "No prophet starts a prophecy by himself" (volume 6, p. 159).
 - (1) We know Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel were the human authors, but the Holy Spirit was the ultimate author.
 - (2) We cannot explain the brilliance of a book by simply knowing the author.
 - (B) Deuteronomy 18:15-20 provides a wonderful commentary on the establishment of the prophetic office.
 - (C) The apostles on Pentecost spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).
- c. "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."
 - (A) Does the expression "holy men of God" suggest that the prophets were super heroes of some kind?
 - (B) "Were moved" from *pheromenoi*, being borne, or carried by the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) The most common translation of the Greek *phero* is bring.
 - (2) The word is used in the following verses:
 - (a) "For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there **came** such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (2 Pet. 1:17).
 - (b) "And this voice which **came** from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount"

(2 Pet. 1:18). ESV translation
“came” borne.

- (c) “Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might **bring** not railing accusation against them before the Lord” (2 Pet. 2:11).
- (3) Were the men who wrote mere secretaries or machines?
- (4) Does this passage teach the so-called “mechanical dictation theory?”
- (5) If the Bible writers were “moved by the Holy Spirit,” how could the Bible be full of contradictions? How can it contain errors of any kind – historical or scientific or geographical?
- (6) This is the very high view of inspiration. No wonder Paul affirms that the word is inspired (literally God-breathed) (2 Tim. 3:16).
- (7) There are some teachers in our Christian colleges and universities who deny inerrancy. They believe the Bible is reliable in faith and practice, but it contains some errors of fact, especially in the scientific area.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 2 Peter 1

- 1 If God has already given us all that pertains to life and godliness, why do some modern denominations claim to need additional revelation?
- 2 What are some of the "great and precious promises of the gospel?"
- 3 Define each of the "Christian graces:" virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity.
- 4 What difference would it make if these attitudes and attributes do not find their dwelling in our lives?
- 5 How does the apostle describe those who do not possess these characteristics?
- 6 If we are saved by grace alone through faith alone, why does the apostle Peter demand: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure?"
- 7 According to this chapter, is it possible for a child of God to fall?
- 8 How does the apostle Peter use the term "tabernacle?"
- 9 Did Peter want his message to remain after his death? Explain.
- 10 What are "cunningly devised fables?"
- 11 When Peter said he was an eyewitness of his majesty, what did he have in mind?
- 12 Not only were Peter, James and John eyewitnesses, they were also "earwitnesses." What does that mean?
- 13 What "holy mount" did the apostle Peter have in mind?
- 14 In this context, what does the term, "private interpretation" mean?
- 15 Where did the faithful prophets get their messages?
- 16 When they spoke or wrote, were they really speaking for God?

Chapter 2

The Epistle Of 2 Peter

CHAPTER 2

A. False teachers, their motivations and their destiny (2:1-11).

1. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2:1).

a. "But there were false prophets among the people."

(A) Literally, there arose false prophets among the people. "Arose" from *ginomai*, became.

(B) Three tests of a false prophet:

(1) Speaking where God had not authorized his message. "But the prophet who shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak...even that prophet shall die" (Dt. 18:20).

(2) Speak in the name of another god (Dt. 18:20).

(3) Make a false prediction. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet has spoken it presumptuously: you shall not be afraid of him" (Dt. 18:22).

(C) The prophet was required to deliver God's message in God's words to God's

people. He had no right to alter the message or to negotiate with his hearers.
(D) The expression, "among the people," refers to the Jewish people.

(1) "For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest everyone deals falsely" (Jer. 6:13).

(2) "And my hand shall be upon the prophets who see vanity, and divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord God" (Ezek. 13:9).

(3) In the days of Ezekiel, there were some women who were prophesying out of their own hearts. The Lord condemned such prophetesses (Ezek. 13:17ff.).

b. "Even as there shall be false teachers among you."

(A) There have always been false teachers; apparently there always will be.

(B) The false teachers will be "among you." Does that mean Christians have to be alert to false teachers?

(1) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You shall know them by their fruits" (Mt. 7:15-16).

(2) "For I know this, that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30).

- (3) How does one recognize a false teacher?
 - (4) Whose responsibility is it to recognize and to expose false teachers?
 - (5) Pat Boone recommends what he calls "the Gamaliel attitude." Should gospel preachers and other Christians cultivate that attitude?
 - (6) It is not popular to discuss false teachers, but we have no choice in the matter if we are to imitate Christ and his apostles.
- b. "Who privily shall bring in damnable heresies."
- (A) "Privily" from *pareisaxousin*, *pareisago*, *para*, beside, *eisago*, to bring in. The word means to bring in by the side, as if secretly.
- (1) In many cases, false teachers seek to gain a following before they let anyone know their true intentions. Cultic groups almost always operate in this way.
 - (2) "And that because of false brethren unawares (*pareisaktous*) brought in, who came in privily (*pareiselthon*: slipping in unwanted) to spy out (*kataskopesai*: to make a treacherous investigation) our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage (*katadou-lousousin*: abject slavery)" (Gal. 2:4). Not all false teachers behave in such

a fashion, but many do. We must always be alert to what preachers teach.

(B) "Destructive heresies" from *haireseis apoleias*.

(1) "Heresies" from *haireo*, a choosing, a school, a sect.

(2) "Destructive" from *apoleias*, ruin. Is false doctrine all that serious or is this merely a hypothetical situation?

c. "Even denying the Lord that brought them."

(A) Modernists, liberals, agnostics and other false teachers deny the one who came to earth to save them from eternal damnation.

(B) "Bought" from *agorazo*, from *agora*, marketplace. The word is similar to the Greek word (*lutroo*) "redeem" (1 Pet. 1:18).

(C) The word "Lord" is from the Greek *despoten* from which we get our word "despot."

d. "And bring upon themselves swift destruction."

(A) When men deny Christ and the Christian system, they seal their own destiny.

(B) "Swift" from *tachus*, our word "tachometer."

2. "And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2:2).

a. "And many shall follow their pernicious ways."

(A) If the false teachers were the only ones whose souls were in danger, it would be serious enough, but they lead others into error. Regardless of how utterly ridiculous some false teachings are, there are always some people who will embrace them.

What religious teachings could be more unreasonable and unscriptural than those of Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists? Yet literally tens of millions of people have joined these groups.

- (B) "Shall follow" from a verb meaning to follow out, to trace to the end. Cf. 1 Peter 1:16.
- (C) The Greek text from which the KJV was translated has *apoleiais*, destructive ways. Other manuscripts have *aselgeiais*, lascivious doings, licentiousness, debauchery.
- b. "By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."
 - (A) Literally, because of whom (*di' hous*). The false teachers who lead men astray cause the way of truth—the way God has designed to save men—to be evil spoken of.
 - (B) "Evil spoken of" from *blasphemethesetai*, blasphemed.
- 3. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not" (2:3).
 - a. "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you."
 - (A) "Covetousness" from *pleonexiai*, literally over-reaching. The Greek is translated "covetousness" (eight times); "greediness" (one time) and "covetous practices" (one time). "Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15). Would a man actually preach for money? Are some preachers available to the highest bidder?

- (B) "Feigned words" from *plastois logois*, well-turned words. "False words" (RSV); "forged words" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 161); "deceptive words" (McCord).
- (C) "Make merchandise" from *emporeusontai*, *emporeuomai*, *emporos*, a traveling merchant. James uses a similar word which means "buy and sell and get gain" (Jas. 4:13).
- (D) These false teachers are accused of being more interested in the fleece than in the flock. "You eat the fat, and you clothe you with the wool, you kill them that are fed: but you feed not the flock" (Ezek. 34:3). The prophet Ezekiel asked: "Should not the shepherd feed the flocks" (Ezek. 34:2)?
- (1) Paul exhorted the Ephesian elders: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed (literally, to shepherd) the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).
- (2) Peter urged his fellow elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not of constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (1 Pet. 5:2). The word "feed" in this verse is also "shepherd."
- b. "Whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not."
- (A) The false teachers may think they are getting by, but their judgment will come. *Krima* may mean either judgment or sentence.
- (B) God has decreed that the false prophets

- and false teachers will be punished.
 “Now from of old” (*ekpalai*).
- (C) “Lingers not” from *ouk argei*, is not idle (from *argeo*, not working).
- (D) Their damnation (*apoleia*) or destruction does not sleep (*ou nustazei*) from *nuo*, to nod. The word “destruction” is used three times in the first three verses of this chapter. That fact ought to warn all teachers to be faithful to the word—not to impose their own beliefs on the scriptures.
4. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment” (2:4).
- a. “For if God spared not the angels that sinned.”
- (A) “Spared” from *pheidomai*, “to forego the infliction of that evil or retribution which was designed” (Vine, p. 57).
- (B) The word “angel” (*angelos*) means messenger. Angels have served as ministers to those who are saved (Heb. 1:14).
- (1) What angels does Peter have in mind?
- (2) May angels that have sinned be redeemed? Did Jesus die for fallen angels?
- (3) Is Satan a fallen angel?
- b. “But cast them down to hell.”
- (A) “Hell” in this verse comes not from *gehenna*—the usual word for “hell” but from *tartaros*, *tartaroo*, having cast them down to hell.
- (B) This is the only time the word *tartarus* is found in the New Testament. It seems to refer to the place where the wicked

are thrust until the judgment. It is difficult to draw dogmatic conclusions from one appearance of a word in the Bible.

- c. "And delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."
 - (A) "Delivered" from *paredoken, paradidomi*, gave them up. The same form of the word is used in Romans 1:24, 26, 28. They gave God up; so God gave them up.
 - (B) The text from which the King James Version was translated (Textus Receptus) has the word *serais*, chains. Other manuscripts have *sirois*, pits.
 - (1) Lenski says the manuscript evidence favors "pits," but everything else favors "chains" (p. 310).
 - (2) RSV has "pits of nether gloom." ESV has "chains of gloomy darkness."
 - (C) "Reserved" from *tereo*, kept for judgment.
- 5. "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2:5).
 - a. "And spared not the old world."
 - (A) Because of the wickedness on earth, God did not spare the ancient world of Noah's day.
 - (B) There is an abundance of evidence of the universal flood of Noah's day.
 - b. "But saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness."
 - (A) Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives were the only ones saved from the waters of the flood. Cf. 1 Peter 3:20-21.
 - (B) "Preacher" from *keruka*, a herald. The herald had to deliver the king's message exactly like it was given to

him. He could not alter the message in any way.

- (C) How did Noah discover what constituted righteousness? Righteousness is what one does (Acts 10:34-35; 1 John 7, 10). No man is righteous just because of what God has done through Jesus Christ, although no one could be righteous without that.
- c. "Bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."
 - (A) "Flood" from *kataklysmos* (*kataklyzo*: to inundate). Our word "cataclysm" comes from this Greek word.
 - (B) "World of the ungodly" from *kosmoi asebon*, impious. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5).
- 6. "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those who after should live ungodly" (2:6).
 - a. "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes."
 - (A) "Turning into ashes" from *tephroo* (*tephra*: ashes). The tense of the verb reads: "Having reduced to ashes."
 - (B) The account of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah and of their destruction is recorded in Genesis 19. What were their sins?
 - (1) The word "homosexuality" does not appear in Genesis 19, but there can be no doubt of its prominence in Sodom, Gomorrah and the other cities

- of the plains. "But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. 13:13).
- (2) Their sin was grievous (Gen. 18:20-21).
 - (3) People of Israel were compared to Sodom and Gomorrah because they "commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evildoers, that none returns from his wickedness" (Jer. 23:14).
 - (4) Ezekiel mentions "pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness," and condemns them for not sharing with the poor and the needy (Ezek. 16:49-50).
 - (5) Jude says they went after "strange flesh" (Jude 7). They committed fornication (*ekporneuo*: unnatural lust, perverted fornication).
- b. "Condemned them with an overthrow."
- (A) God judged (*katakrino*) the Sodomites. The word also can be rendered "condemned."
 - (B) "Overthrow" from *katastrophe*, catastrophe. In geology, this is the basis for "catastrophism" – flood geology.
 - (1) "Condemned them to extinction" (RSV).
 - (2) The overthrow was about as complete as we can imagine.
- c. "Making them an example unto those who after should live ungodly."
- (A) For those who neglect to read the Old Testament, this verse should serve as a wake-up call. God gave the Old Testament that we might learn not to live like some

- of the people in ancient times (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6-10).
- (B) "Having made them" (*tithemi*).
- (C) "Example" from *hupodeigma*, to copy under, here a copy to be imitated. Cf. James 5:10.
- (D) "Being about to live ungodly" (*mellonton asebesin*).
7. "And delivered just Lot, vexed with filthy conversation of the wicked" (2:7).
- a. "Delivered" from *ruomai*, to rescue.
- (A) "Deliver us from evil" (Mt. 6:13).
- (B) "Has delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13).
- (C) "Just" from *dikaion*, righteous, right. "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). How could a man who offered his virgin daughters to a bunch of lechers be called "just?" Did he know the men of Sodom were not interested in women?
- (D) "Vexed" from *kataponoumenon*, *kataponeo*, to work down, to exhaust with labor, to oppressed, "distressed" (RSV).
- (E) "Filthy conversation of the wicked" from *ton atthesmon en aselgeia anastrophes*.
- (1) *Asthemos*, from *a*, not, *thesmon*, revels against the law or against custom.
- (2) *Aselgeia*, abandoned to licentiousness. The word suggests the very depth of degradation.
- (3) *Anastrophes*, manner of life, one's conduct or behavior.
8. "For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2:8).
- a. Peter offers an explanation for Lot's being

vexed or distressed with the Sodomites.

(A) *Enkatoikeo*, the settle down in a dwelling, to dwell in a fixed place.

(1) We know the conflict that arose between Abraham and Lot. Lot chose the well watered plains of Jordon.

(2) We cannot keep from wondering how long it was until he learned he had made a bad choice. He should have known from the beginning. "Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (Gen. 13:12-13).

(B) Living among the people of Sodom, Lot had ample opportunity to observe the wickedness of the Sodomites.

- b. "In seeing and hearing." The Sodomites apparently did not attempt to hide their wickedness. How could Lot keep from knowing of their abominable conduct?
 - c. "Vexed" from *ebasanizen*, keep on vexing. *Basanizo*, to test metals, to torment.
 - d. *Hemeran ex hemeras*, day in and day out.
 - e. *Anomois ergois*, lawless deeds.
9. "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2:9).
- a. "The Lord knows" (*oiden kurios*), knows perfectly. The Lord knows perfectly how to deliver his children, as illustrated by the cases of Noah and Lot.
 - b. *Ruesthai* deliver or rescue.
 - c. "Temptation" from *peirasmou*. He knows how to deliver. Will he deliver (1 Cor. 10:13)?

- d. "Reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
 (A) "Reserve" from *terein*, to keep, to preserve. He knows how to preserve us, but will he do it regardless of our behavior?
 (B) *Adikous*, unrighteous, unjust.
 (C) *Eis hemeran kriseos*, the day of judgment.
 (D) *Kolazomenous*, to be punished. Present tense indicates continuous punishment.
10. "But chiefly them who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, and self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (2:10).
- a. The word "chiefly" (*malista*) means chiefly, especially. Most versions seem to render the Greek "especially."
- b. "Walk after the flesh" from *opiso sarkos*, after the flesh. "Those who indulge in the lust of the flesh" (ESV).
- c. "Lust of uncleanness" from *epithumia miasmou*, lust of pollution, "lust of defiling passion" (RSV).
- d. "Despise government" from *kataphronountas kuriotetos*, despise lordship or despise authority. The word *kataphronountas* is from *kata*, down, and *phroneo*, to look. The word literally means to look down on.
- e. "Presumptuous" comes from *tolmetai*, daring, from *tolmao*, to dare. The word is usually translated either "dare" or "bold" or "durst."
- f. "Self-willed" from *authadeis, auto*, self, *hedomai*, to be.
- g. "They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."
 (A) Literally, they do not tremble when they

- blaspheme dignities or authorities. "Daring, self-willed, blaspheming, they tremble before no rulers" (McCord).
- (B) Is our society characterized by people who have no respect for any kind of authority – governmental, biblical or parental?
11. "Whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusations against them before the Lord" (2:11).
- Angels with greater power (*ischui*) and might (*dunamei*) do not bring railing judgment against them (*blasphemon krisin*).
 - Krisin* can mean either judgment, charge or accusation.
- B. Attributes – and final destiny of false teachers (2:12-22).
- "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2:12).
 - "These" in this verse refers to the false teachers who were troubling the churches. They were like "natural brute beasts" made to be taken and destroyed.
 - "Natural" from *phusika*, the same word usually rendered "nature" (Rom. 1:26-27). The word can mean either inborn and that which is developed through habit, what we call "second nature."
 - "Brute" from *aloga*, without reason. Jude uses the same expression in referring to false teachers. "And these speak evil of things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 10). Cf. Acts 25:27.

- (C) "Made" from *gennaō*, born. It is the brute beasts—not the false teachers—who are born to be taken and destroyed. This language also provides insight into the terrible fate of the false teachers.
- b. The false teachers speak evil of things they do not understand. They are loud ignoramuses posing as professional experts (Robertson, volume 5, p. 166).
 - c. They (the false teachers) shall perish in their own corruption.
 - (A) "Shall in their destroying surely be destroyed" (ASV).
 - (B) They "will also be destroyed in their destruction" (ESV).
 - (C) A false teacher does not have to be mean and ugly-spirited to fall under this condemnation. Some false teachers are genteel, loving and highly educated. That probably makes them more dangerous.
 - (D) But false teachers fall under the condemnation of God. Peter wrote of their "damnable heresies." The false teachers bring on themselves swift destruction (2 Pet. 2:1).
2. "And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast on you" (2:13).
- a. The false teachers will receive their just reward.
 - b. Some manuscripts have *adikoumenoi*, suffering wrong. The Textus Receptus (from which the KJV was translated) has *komioumenoi* (*komizo*, shall receive).

- (A) "Suffering wrong for their wrongdoing" (RSV).
- (B) "Suffering wrong as a reward for their wrongdoing" (ESV).
- (C) Whichever is the correct text does not change the overall impression of the verse.
- c. "As they who count it pleasure to riot in the day time."
- (A) *Hegoumenoi*, esteeming, counting.
- (B) "Pleasure" from *hedonen*, from which we get our word "hedonism." Cf. James 4:1, 3.
- (C) *Ten en hemera truphen*, count it pleasure to riot in the day time.
- (1) "Revel in the day time" (RSV).
- (2) Night time revelry does not satisfy their perverted desires; they also revel in the day time.
- (3) "Riot" from *truphen*, to enervate. "Esteeming ephemeral indulgence pleasure."
- (4) You might think the apostle Peter was writing specifically about our culture.
- d. "Spots they are and blemishes."
- (A) *Spiloi*, disfiguring spot (Eph. 5:27). Their conduct is a spot on the body of Christ and on the human family.
- (B) *Momoi*, blot. *Amomoi*, without spots.
- e. "Sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast on you."
- (A) *Entruphontes*, *truphao*, to live luxuriously. The same Greek word translated "riot" earlier in this verse.
- (B) *Apatais*, "love feasts" (RV), "reveling in their dissipation" (RSV). Some manuscripts have *agapais*, love feasts.

- (C) *Suneuochoumenoi, suneuchoeo, sun*, together, *eunocheo*, to feed abundantly, "carousing with you" (RSV). I wonder how many of the television preachers fall into this category. Jim Bakker did at one time; so did Jimmy Swaggart.
- f. What a revealing description of false teachers.
3. "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children" (2:14).
- a. "Having eyes full of adultery."
- (A) "A striking expression to describe the man who sees an adulteress in every woman, or in plainer words, who cannot see a woman without lascivious thoughts arising in his heart, such thoughts becoming as it were stereotyped, and betraying themselves in looks" (Joseph B. Mayor, **The Epistles of Jude and II Peter**, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1907, p. 135. A reprint, 1965).
- (B) The word in the Greek is not "adultery" (*moicheia*), but *moichalidos*, adulteresses. Most of the reputable commentaries say the word means an adulteress, but not one translation I have renders the Greek in that way.
- (C) *Akatapastous, katapauo*, to cease. "Insatiable for sin" (RSV). The ESV uses the same words.
- b. "Beguiling unstable souls."
- (A) *Deleazontes*, enticing, to catch by bait (Jas. 1:14).
- (B) *Asteriktous*, unsteadfast. *Sterizo*, to set up, to establish, fix firmly.

- c. "An heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children."
- (A) "Exercise" from *gegumnasmenen, gumnazo* (Heb. 5:14). Our word "gymnasium" comes from this Greek word.
- (B) "Covetous" from *pleonexias, greed, "hearts trained in greed"* (RSV). Practice makes perfect. Peter is describing teachers like Balaam who loved the wages of unrighteousness.
- (C) *Kataras tekna*, "a Hebrew idiom expressing character through kinship" (Woods, p. 173). Similar expressions: "Son of perdition" (John 17:12); "sons of thunder" (Mk. 3:17); "sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). They were cursed children—not only because they were bringing curses on themselves, but also because they would bring curses on others.
4. "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Pet. 2:15).
- a. "Forsaken" from *kataleipontes, kataleipo*, having left. The verb is a present active participle. It involves continuous action.
- (A) The verb appears twenty-five times in the New Testament and is almost always translated "leaving."
- (1) "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother" (Mt. 19:5).
- (2) "By faith he (Moses) forsook Egypt" (Heb. 11:27).
- (B) If these false teachers had never been faithful members of the Lord's church, how could they leave or forsake the right way?

- b. "The right way." Literally, the "straight way" (*Euthus hodon*).
- c. "Gone astray." If they were born astray, how could they go astray? If they were never in the right way, it would make sense to speak of their having gone astray. "Gone astray" from *eplanethesan, planao*, to err, to go astray. Our word "planet" comes from this Greek word.
- d. "Following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor."
- (A) "Following" from *exakolouthesantes*, having followed.
- (B) The story of Balaam can be found in Numbers 22:1-24; 31; Dt. 24:4-5.
- (C) Balaam asked the Lord if he could go to Moab and curse the Israelites to prevent their becoming a great threat to the Moabites (Num. 22:9-11).
- (D) God said to Balaam: "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse this people: for they are blessed" (Num. 22:12). Should not Balaam understood what the Lord told him?
- (E) Balak sent more and more honorable men to ask Balaam to curse the Israelites. They offered him great rewards (Num. 22:15-17).
- (F) Balaam should have told them to go back home. Instead, he told them to wait until he had spoken to the Lord. He said to the men: "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. If he had really meant that, he would have been blessed. But he

- told the men to wait "that I may know what the Lord will say unto more" (Num. 22:18-19). Does the Lord have to repeat himself when he speaks?
- (G) Balaam died in infamy because of his rebellion against God.
- (H) God sent a talking donkey to warn the rebellious prophet.
- e. Balaam "loved the wages of unrighteousness."
- (A) Guy N. Woods writes concerning the false teachers: "They prostituted the doctrine of Christ for personal gain, and taught doctrines contrary to the will of God because they loved the wages of unrighteousness" (p. 168).
- (B) A. T. Robertson. "Who loved the hire of wrong-doing" (volume 6, p. 168). (*Hos misthon adikias egapesen*).
- (C) Are there preachers today like Balaam and the false teachers Peter had in mind? Peter had previously written: "And through covetousness shall they with feigned (or well turned) words make merchandise of you" (2 Pet. 2:3).
- (D) If the pay in God's service had been as monetarily rewarding as the promises of Balak, Balaam would not have been tempted to disobey God. How tragic that men will sell their souls for a mess of pottage.
5. "But he was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2:16).
- a. God sent a dumb animal to provide proof for the prophet. How humiliating that a dumb donkey had to provide reproof to God's spokesman!

- b. "Iniquity" from *paranomia*, lawbreaker. *Para*, beside, contrary to, *nomos*, law. Paul uses the verb form (*paranomeo*) in the following passage: "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite you, you whited wall: for do you judge me after the law, and command me to be smitten *contrary to the law*" (Acts 23:3)?
 - c. The word "dumb" (*aphonon*) means without voice. The word is used both of idols and of animals.
 - d. The word "ass" or "donkey" is from the Greek *hupozugion* and literally means under the yoke. *Hupo*, under, *zugos*, yoke. "Behold, thy king comes unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass (*onos*) and a colt the foal of an ass (*hupozugion*)" (Mt. 21:5). John uses slightly different language.
 - e. *En anthropou phone phthegxemenon*, in a man's voice speaking. *Phtengomai*, to utter a sound.
 - f. *Ekolusen*, literally stayed, "restrained" (RSV).
 - g. *Paraphronian*, madness, literally being beside one's wits. *Para*, beside, contrary to, *phren*, mind.
6. "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2:17).
- a. "Wells" from *petai*, fountains, "waterless springs" (RSV).
 - (A) "Clouds they are without water" (Jude 12).
 - (B) Jeremiah 2:13.
 - b. *Anudroi*, waterless. Our word "hycro" comes from this Greek word.
 - c. "Clouds that are carried with a tempest."
 - (A) *Nephelai*, clouds. Some manuscripts have *homichlai*, mists.
 - (B) *Hupo lailapos elaunomenai*, by storm driven.

These clouds or mists promise more than they can deliver; the same is true of false prophets.

- d. "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."
(A) "For whom."
(B) *Ho zophos tou skotous*. The gloom of darkness. "The nether gloom of darkness" (RSV).
(C) "Reserved" from *teteretai*, is kept.
(D) We must examine every teacher by the divine standard. We will not be excused for failure to know the truth.
(E) We must have the same attitude of the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
7. "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error" (2:18).
a. "When they speak great swelling words of vanity."
(A) "Speak loud boasts of folly."
(B) The so-called "health and wealth" evangelists fall under the condemnation of this passage.
(C) "Allure" from *deleazousin*, to entice, to beguile. It was used originally of using bait (*delear*) to catch a fish. It is translated "beguiling unstable souls" (2 Pet. 2:14).
(D) "Lusts of the flesh" means more than appealing to sexual appetites. It can mean a desire for popularity or for money. Peter has already mentioned these ideas (verses 3, 14).
(E) "Wantonness" from *aselgeiais*, lasciviousness, excess, absence of restraint, indecency,

extreme sensuality. In his book, **New Testament Words** (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), Dr. William Barclay provides these comments: "It is Lightfoot who seizes on the essential qualities of *aselgeia*. He says that a man may be unclean (*akathartos*) and hide his sin, but the man who is *alseges* (the adjective) shocks public decency.... He is the man who is lost to shame" (pp. 60-61).

(F) "Those who were clean escaped from them who live in error."

(1) "Those who are just barely escaping from those who live in error."

(2) Peter would not have used this language of those who were not Christians. Does that mean Christians are in danger of being led astray by false teachers?

(3) "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are entangled again therein, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Pet. 2:20). How can these words apply to alien sinners? They have not escaped the pollutions of the world.

(4) "Error" from *plane*, delusion. There are many who deliberately rebel against God. "They do not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28). There are others who sincerely believe they are living for God, but they have been deceived.

8. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom

a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2:19).

- a. False teachers have been notorious for making promises to free their hearers from debt, from sexual responsibilities, etc. David Moses Berg, founder of the Family of God cult, actually used young women to seduce men to join the cult. He called the young women "flirty fishers."
- b. America has provided political and financial freedom to countless thousands of people. Surely all of us are concerned about those kinds of freedom. But the greatest freedom of all is the freedom to serve God. The gospel of Jesus Christ provides freedom from sin, freedom from the Mosaic covenant and freedom to serve God.
- c. False teachers promise freedom or liberty to their followers, but they themselves are not free from corruption.

(A) Supporters of abortion, especially Planned Parenthood of America, promise young women freedom from a child and from the responsibility of a family. Two of the most powerful books on this topic: David Reardon, **Aborted Women: Silent No More** (Westchester, IL: 1987). Dr. Reardon's book is composed of chapters written by women who have had abortions. Those women established an organization with the title, Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA). "Contrary to the popular slogan 'freedom of choice,' women who have experienced it know that abortion is seldom, if ever, a 'free choice'" (p. x). Nancyjo Mann, the founder of WEBA, wrote the Foreword to the book. A few

excerpts from her chapter are revealing. "Even today I remember her last kick on my left side....The abortion killed not only my daughter, it killed a part of me....I was a murderer....I began to fire up on heroin, cocaine—anything and everything I could find....My suicidal desires climaxed on one bitter night in January of 1978....It was time for people to learn that abortion does not solve problems; instead, it changes them, warps them, and creates new problems" (pp. xvi-xxii).

- (B) Drug dealers and drug apologists assure those who take drugs they will be free. A visit to any hospital, mental health facility, doctor's office and morgue will know the drug dealers are liars. Drugs, including the use of some prescription drugs, are enslaving.
- (C) Sexual promiscuity does not free people who engage in adultery, premarital sex and homosexuality. Ask those who have AIDS, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, genital herpes, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Ask the men and women who have lost their wives, families and friends.
- (D) The other book about abortion I wanted to mention has the title, **Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion** (Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 2002). The book was written by Dr. Theresa Burke and Dr. David Reardon. Dr. Laura Schlessinger wrote the Foreward. Dr. Burke counsels women who have suffered emotional physical and spiritual problems

from having abortions. In a poll conducted by the Los Angeles Times, 74% of those who admitted a past abortion said that women should not be able to choose an abortion for themselves. They personally believed that abortion is morally wrong (p. xx). Dr. Burke quotes one woman as saying, "My abortion did not end my pain...it began it" (p. 31). Another woman confessed: "I have been emotionally tortured by this experience for the past 24 years. It made my life a pit of depression and anxiety" (p. 37). None of this sounds like the kind of freedom God provides through Jesus Christ.

- d. Imagine a person in prison saying to someone outside: Do what I tell you to do and you will be free. Who would listen to someone in prison?
- e. Those who promise liberty are themselves "servants of corruption."
 - (A) The word "servant" (*douloi*), slaves.
 - (B) "For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness" (Rom. 6:20). We are the slaves of the one we devote our lives to (Rom. 6:16). A man is either a slave to sin or a slave to God. There is no middle ground.
- f. "For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."
 - (A) "For a man is a slave of anything that conquers him" (Williams).
 - (B) "For a man is a slave of whatever masters him" (Phillips).
 - (C) "Bondage" in this verse is from the same word translated "servant" or "slave." It is a verb: *dedoulotai*.

9. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2:20).
- a. "Escaped" from *phuego*, flight. The verb in this verse means to escape from, to flee away from.
 - b. They had escaped from the pollutions of the world.
 - (A) "Pollutions" from *miasmata* (our word "miasma" from this word) means defilements. The word is translated "lust of uncleanness" in verse 10. "Lust of defiling passion" (ESV).
 - (B) Could this language be used of one who has not obeyed the gospel? Have unbelievers escaped the pollutions of defilements of the world?
 - c. The people Peter had in mind had escaped the defilements of the world "through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior."
 - (A) Peter continually emphasizes the part knowledge plays in the scheme of human redemption.
 - (B) "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).
 - (C) Their knowledge came from the word of God (Acts 20:32; Jas. 1:21).
 - (D) "No man can come to me, except the Father who has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. As it is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore who has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me" (John 6:44-45).
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- (E) It is unthinkable that Peter would describe unbelievers as those who had “escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” That kind of language can be used only of Christians.
- (F) If the doctrine of universalism were true, none of our discussion would make sense. If all men are going to be saved, whether they know Christ or obey him will in any way affect their eternal salvation. Two Quaker theologians, Philip and James Mulholland, have written a book, **If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person** (San Francisco: HarperSan-Francisco, 2003). Their book attempts to make an argument that everyone will eventually be saved. They quote a number of theologians to sustain their totally unscriptural and unreasonable doctrine.
- (1) Benjamin Rush. “The Universal doctrine prevails more and more in our country, particularly among persons eminent for their piety, in whom it is not a mere speculation but a principle of action in the heart prompting to practical goodness” (p. 221).
 - (2) Elizabeth Barrett Browning. “Universalism is the most beautiful word in the English language” (p. 222).
 - (3) William Barclay. “The only victory love can enjoy is the day when its offer of love is answered by the return of love. The only possible final

- triumph is a universe loved by and in love with God" (p. 223).
- (4) Madeleine L'Engle. "All will be redeemed in God's fullness of time, all, not just the small portion of the population who have been given the grace to know and to accept Christ. All the strayed and stolen sheep. All the little lost ones" (p. 223).
- d. They had escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled therein and overcome.
- (A) The word "entangled" comes from the Greek *empleko* and means to inweave. "No man who wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:4).
- (B) Not only are some entangled with this life or world; they are overcome by it. Is he speaking of the false teachers or those who have been led astray by them? "Overcome" from *hettaomai*, to be made inferior, to be enslaved. Peter used the same word in verse 19. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage."
- e. "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning."
- (A) "The last state has become worse with them than the first."
- (B) A question for the universalist: "If all men are going to be saved regardless of their behavior, how could one state be worse than any other?"

- (C) A question for the Calvinist: "If men cannot fall from grace, what difference could any of this make?"
- (D) These verses are designed to warn Christians about falling away and being lost. If that is not their meaning, I am not sure they have any meaning.
10. "For it had been better for them not have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2:21).
- Again take note of the times Peter stresses knowing. The word "known" in this verse is an intensified form of the word *ginosko*. The word means full or complete knowledge. These were people who had come to a complete understanding of the gospel. They were not like the ones mentioned in Christ's Parable of the Sower. Some of the seed fell on way side soil and some fell on rocky soil. The people in 2 Peter 2 were those who had heard the word, believed it and obeyed it from the heart.
 - When people know the way of righteousness and then turn back to the world, they are in danger of eternal fire.
 - The man who never hears the gospel is not in same danger as the ones who obey the gospel and then forsake the Lord (Heb. 2:1-3).
 - The word "turn" (*hupostrepho*) means to turn back or to return.
 - "The holy commandment" is the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - "Delivered" from *paradidomi* (to hand down). The noun form of this word (*paradosis*) is usually translated "tradition."
11. "But it has happened unto them according to

the true proverb, The dog has turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2:22).

- a. This is not a pretty picture of backsliders. But it is God's view.
- b. If the context means anything, Peter has in mind those who have honestly obeyed the gospel. They are the ones who escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 2:20). They were the ones who had known the way of righteousness (2:21).
- c. How can Calvinists or anyone else attempt to sustain the doctrine of once in grace, always in grace in view of these verses?
 - (A) "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).
 - (B) In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus spoke of those who for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away (Lk. 8:13). Dr. A. T. Robertson. "Ostensibly they are sincere and have made a real start in the life of faith" (volume 2, p. 114).
- d. "Proverb" from *paroimias*, a wayside saying. "This parable (*paromian*: allegory) Jesus spoke unto them: but they did not understand what the things were which he spoke" (John 10:6).
- e. A person who obeys the gospel and then turns his back on the Lord is like a dog that returns to his vomit. Such a picture is nauseating, but it is what the Lord thinks of those who apostatize from the faith. "As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool returns to his folly" (Prov. 26:11). Surely a little dog

as sweet as Missy would not return to her own vomit!

- f. "The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - (A) We do not know the origin of this proverb, but it probably originated among the Gentiles.
 - (B) But all of us who grew up with hogs understand the nature of hogs. We know they will return to the muddiest pond they can find.
 - (C) But surely unfaithful Christians cannot be described in this way!

2 PETER AND JUDE

Both epistles were directed to Christians. We have already seen that truth in 2 Peter. Notice the people to whom Jude addresses his epistle. "To them who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1). If there were no danger of falling away, why would Jude warn of the danger of being led astray by certain men who had crept in unawares—ungodly men (Jude 4)? Notice the examples Jude gives of those who have fallen away—the Israelites (Jude 5), angels (v. 6), Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7). Jude exhorted his readers to have compassion on some, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 22-23). If there were no danger of falling away, why would Jude write: "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21)?

Living For Jesus: Questions For 2 Peter 2

- 1 Peter said there were "false prophets among the people." What people?
- 2 False teachers never announce their true intentions. Peter said they "privily" shall bring in damnable heresies. Define "privily" and "heresies."
- 3 What are the dangers of false teachers?
- 4 Are false teachers ever motivated by money? Explain.
- 5 Define "feigned words."
- 6 Discuss Noah as a "preacher of righteousness."
- 7 What was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah? What happened to those cities?
- 8 What will be the ultimate fate of false teachers?
- 9 Define the words "presumptuous" and "self-willed."
- 10 Are false teachers ever motivated by sexual desires? Explain "eyes full of adultery."
- 11 Who was Balaam? What were his transgressions?
- 12 How did the Lord rebuke Balaam?
- 13 Of what value are "wells without water" or "clouds that are carried about with a tempest?" Why did Peter use these figures?
- 14 Would one who had "escaped the pollutions of the world" be Christians? Could they fall from grace?
- 15 False teachers promised liberty to their followers, but the false teachers were slaves to sin. Discuss.
- 16 How does Peter describe Christians who return to their old ways?

Chapter 3

The Epistle Of 2 Peter

CHAPTER 3

- A. The reason for Peter's second letter (3:1-2).
1. "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in the both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance" (3:1).
 - a. Those who deny the Petrine authorship of this epistle have to give good reasons for rejecting it. They have not been able to do that. The author of this letter claims to be the same man who wrote 1 Peter.
 - b. It is significant that Peter wrote unto these early Christians. His words in his epistles are just as inspiring as those given on Pentecost.
 - c. Both epistles were designed to stir up the pure minds of his readers.
 - (A) "Stir up" from *diegeiro* and means to awake (Mk. 4:38), to arise. Peter used the same word earlier in this epistle. "Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Pet. 1:13).
 - (B) "Pure" from *eilikrine*, sincere, wholesome. Paul used the same word in the following passage. "That you may approve the things which are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10). The original meaning of the word seems to mean: to judge by sunlight or to sift by rapid rolling.

- (C) "Mind" *dianoian*, understanding. Several passages translate the word "understanding" (Eph. 1:18; 4:18; 1 John 5:20).
- d. Many of the great truths were very familiar to Peter's readers, but he knew the tendency of human beings to forget. Is not the work of the preacher primarily to remind people of the truths they already know?
2. "That you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (3:2).
- a. The words "mindful" and "remembrance" come from the same Greek word. The tense of the verb "stir up" in 2 Peter 1:13 and in the preceding verse is present. That means continuous action. "I want to keep on stirring you up by making you mindful of the truths of the gospel." Why do human beings tend to forget the great doctrines of New Testament Christianity?
- (A) Worldly pursuits?
- (B) Getting too busy?
- (C) If Bible doctrine is not important, what real difference would forgetting it make?
- b. Who can overlook the significance of the term "words" – not just thoughts or ideas – but words?
- c. The words God wanted these early Christians to know were "spoken" (literally, spoken before: *proeiremenon*) by the holy prophets.
- (A) The word "prophet" means a spokesman, in this case, a spokesman for God. The prophet did not necessarily predict the future; he just spoke the words God gave him.

- (B) The prophets were “holy” (*hagion*) because they were dedicated to God’s service. They were not some kind of super-spiritual people—just men who were consecrated to the work of God.
- d. “The commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.” If one can read passages like this and conclude that the commandments are not necessary, he can see more than I can.
- B. Doubts about the Lord’s second coming (3:3-7).
1. “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts” (3:3).
 - a. The early Christians were often warned about those who would seek to destroy their faith. Jesus had warned them (Mt. 7: 15-20) and the apostles had warned them. We do not know specifically in this case what was said or who said it.
 - b. “In the last days” (*ep’ eschaton ton hemeron*) has come to mean the end of the Christian era—the last days of the last days—the end of the age.
 - (A) People often ask, “Do you believe we are living in the last days?”
 - (B) The answer to that question should be: “Yes, I believe we are living in the last days and have been since the day of Pentecost.”
 - (1) On the day of Pentecost, Peter quoted these words from Joel 2:28: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

- (2) Peter prefaced his quotation from Joel 2:28-32 by saying, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). He then quoted Joel's prophecies about "the last days."
 - (3) How can anyone miss the point Peter was making on Pentecost?
- c. "Scoffers" from *empaaigmone empaiktai*, literally "mockers with mockery." "Lest haply, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him" (Lk. 14:29). This was said of a man who started to build a tower, but did not have enough money to finish it. He had not sufficiently counted the cost.
 - d. "Walking after their own lusts."
 - (A) Is it possible they did not want the Lord to return? They did not want him interfering with their pleasure.
 - (B) People living in sin do not want to believe that the holy Son of God will return to judge them for their ungodliness.
 2. "And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation" (3:4).
 - a. "Where is the promise of his coming?"
 - (A) The mockers almost certainly knew that both Jesus and his apostles had emphasized his second coming. The mockers want to know why he has not come.
 - (B) There are many modernists who doubt the Lord's promise that he will return.
 - (C) Christ promised his apostles that he

- would come again and receive them unto himself (John 14:1-6).
- (D) Peter used the terms "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" – 1 Peter 1:5. and Paul said the Lord would return (1 and 2 Thessalonians).
 - (E) Jesus continually told of his coming at the end of the age (Mt. 24:34-36).
 - (F) The angels at the Lord's ascension told the disciples that Jesus would come in the manner they had seen him go (Acts 1:9-11).
- b. "For since the fathers fell asleep, all things have continued as they were from the beginning of the creation."
- (A) "The Fathers" were almost certainly the patriarchs among the Israelite people. We are not told who the fathers were, but they probably included men like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah and others.
 - (B) "Fell asleep" is a kind way of softening the word death. The expression is called a "euphemism."
 - (C) The skeptics were arguing that nothing has changed since the beginning of creation. Since Christ has not come, it ought to be obvious he is not coming. This is called the doctrine of uniformitarianism. It is the basis of organic evolution. The doctrine rules out all miracles. The contrasting doctrine is called "catastrophism."
 - (1) Sir Charles Lyell invented the theory of uniformitarianism. Charles Darwin used the theory to deny the creation of man and of the animals. Michael Denton. **Evolution: A Theory in Crisis**. Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1985.

“Geological uniformitarianism, more than anything else, eased the way for their acceptance of evolution” (p. 27).

(2) Jonathan Sarfati. **Refuting Evolution**. Brisbane, Australia: Answers in Genesis, 1999. “The philosophy that processes have always occurred at roughly constant rates (“the present is the key to the past”) is often called uniformitarianism” (p. 104). “The Mount St. Helens eruption in Washington State produced 25 feet (7.6 meters) of finely layered sediment in a single afternoon” (p. 105). “The booklet *Stones and Bones* (by Carl Wieland) shows other fossils must have formed rapidly. One is a seven-foot (2 meters) long ichthyosaur (extinct fish-shaped marine reptile) fossilized giving birth. Another is a fish fossilized in the middle of lunch” (p. 107).

(3) The word “catastrophism” comes from the Greek *katastrophē* translated “subverting” (2 Tim. 2:14) and “overthrow” (2 Pet. 2:6).

(D) We need to pay special attention to what Peter says about the creation. Neither he nor any other Bible writer even embraced the notions of evolution. And evolution was known and believed long before Charles Darwin came on the scene. Many of the ancient Greeks accepted some form of evolution.

3. “For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old,

and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water" (3:5).

- a. "For this they willingly are ignorant of."
- (A) It is sad to be ignorant; it is inexcuseable to be willingly ignorant.
 - (B) "For they deliberately overlook this fact" (ESV).
 - (C) "They willfully ignore" (McCord).
 - (D) "Literally, 'for this escapes them being willing'" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 174).
 - (E) Philip Gulley and James Mulholland. **If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person.** San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 2003). Both men are Quakers. Over and over, these men affirm: "I believe God will save every person" (p. 11, for example). Do they deliberately ignore certain passages? They ignore almost all passages which speak of eternal punishment. They twist passages to try to prove their view that everyone will be saved.
 - (1) "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be the sons of your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:44). If we do not love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us, we will be the sons of our heaven anyway?
 - (2) "The Son of man came to seek and save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10).
 - (3) "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10:34-35). What if we do not fear him and do what is right, will

he still accept us? If he will, the language is meaningless.

(4) "For that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who believe on him and receive life eternal" (1 Tim. 1:16).

(a) The word *makrothumia* does not mean "unlimited patience." It is almost always translated long-suffering. It literally means of a long mind. The verb form (*makrothumeo*) means "bear long" (Lk. 18:7) or "suffers long" (1 Cor. 13:4).

(b) If we are all going to be saved, what does believing have to do with it?

(5) "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men" (Tit. 2:11).

(a) Did these authors know about verse 12? "Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this world."

(b) Are these mere suggestions or are they requirements for having God's approval?

(c) "Seek peace and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

(d) There is an explanation for these men's view of universalism: They reject much of the Bible's teaching. One example: "I think Joshua

didn't understand the character of God very well. I believe Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses, David and Solomon; Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel didn't fully comprehend the character of God" (p. 54). They used to believe the Bible was the ultimate source of authority, but no longer do (p. 42).

- (e) When you reject the Bible, you can believe whatever you choose.
- b. "That by the word of God."
 - (A) The word of God created the universe. "And God said, let there be light: and there was light....And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters" (Gen. 1:3, 6).
 - (B) By the word of God the world holds together. All he would have to do to bring this old world to nothing is simply speak.
 - (C) Is the word of God powerful enough to save the lost? Sometimes theologians say, "The Bible does not save, Jesus does."
 - (1) "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).
 - (2) "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).
 - (3) "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one who

- believes; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). The word "able" in Acts 20:32 and in James 1:21 is a verb form of the word rendered "power" in Romans 1:16.
- c. "By the word of God, the heavens were of old."
- (A) "For they deliberately overlook the fact, that the heavens existed long ago" (ESV).
- (B) The earth and the heavens existed long before the flood. We cannot be precise as to the time of the earth's creation, but we know it existed long before the flood.
- d. "The earth standing out of the water, and in the water." This is a very difficult expression to translate.
- (A) The earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God (ESV).
- (B) "The earth existed out of water and through water" (McCord).
- (C) "The earth that had been formed by God's command out of water, and through water" (Williams).
- (D) "By the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water" (NASB).
- (E) "Out of water and amidst water" (A. T. Robertson, volume 6, p. 174).
4. "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished" (3:6).
- a. How much of the world that then was perished? Was it a universal flood or just in the Mediterranean valley?
- (A) Flood stories are almost universal, if not,

universal. There is a flood story among the American Indians and in virtually every tribe and nation on earth. Do these stories have a factual foundation? If they do not, how does one explain their universality?

- (B) There are geological evidences throughout the world. For example, there are fossilized fish on some of the highest mountains in the world.
- (C) "Overflowed" from *katakluzo* and means inundated, deluged (Williams, NASB, ESV), "submerged" (McCord). The noun form of the word is translated "flood" (2 Peter 2:5). Our word "cataclysm" comes from the noun (*kataclusmon*). The word is used in the New Testament only of Noah's flood (Mt. 24:38ff; Lk. 17:27; 2 Peter 2:5).
- (1) There is no doubt Jesus believed in the flood of Noah's day. "But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Mt. 24:37-39).
- (2) Was Jesus merely accommodating his views to the popular myths of his day, as many liberal theologians believe? Jesus was the one who created the world. Surely he knew whether there was a universal flood.

- (D) The world that then was perished (*apollumi*: destroy, lose, marred). The New Testament uses the word 92 times. How can universalists harmonize this word with their view that all people will eventually be saved? Will the ones who disregarded Noah's preaching and were destroyed by the flood be saved in spite of their disbelief?
5. "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (3:7).
- a. I do not know if the heavens were in any way affected by the flood, but we know the earth is not the same as before the flood. The very surface of the earth was radically altered by the flood. When the water began to recede, it was bound to change our earth. Evidences of the flood can be found in almost every country of the world.
- (A) The white cliffs of Dover in England are composed of chalk. Did the flood cause that unusual phenomenon?
- (B) Great deposits of vegetation and animals laid the coals beds and formed the oil in the earth. Incidentally, it does not require millions and millions of years for coal and oil to form. Under the right temperature and pressure, they can form relatively quickly.
- b. The earth and the heavens as we know them will never again be destroyed by water. The rainbow is a sign that God will not send another flood.
- c. The heavens and the earth "by the same word are kept in store."

- (A) God spoke the world into existence. His word sent the flood on all mankind.
 - (B) The heavens and the earth which are now kept in store by the same word. This shows the enormous power of God's word.
 - (C) "Kept in store" (*thesaurizo*: our word "thesaurus") comes from this Greek word. The word is translated "lay up" (Mt. 6:19, 20). "He who lays up treasure for himself" (Lk. 12:21).
 - (D) "Reserved" from *tereo*, to keep, to guard, to watch, to observe. "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).
 - (E) This old world will not be destroyed by water, but by fire. The elements will melt with fervent heat. It will be dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10-11).
 - (F) Will there be a day of judgment? Many liberal theologians, such as Leslie Weatherhead, say no. Jesus and the apostles say yes.
 - (G) "Perdition of ungodly men."
 - (1) "Perdition" from *apoleias*, always translated either "destruction" (Mt. 7:13) or "waste" (Mk. 14:4) or "perdition" or "die" (Rom. 16:25).
 - (2) If the universalists were right, this word is meaningless.
 - (3) "Ungodly men" are those people who reject the law of God and engage in immoral behavior.
- C. Christ's coming like a thief in the night (3:8-13).
1. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (3:8).
 - a. How does one keep from being ignorant

- about any Bible topic? We must search the scriptures to learn what God wants us to know. We know God is eternal. What are a few years or a few centuries with him?
- b. Peter did not say that one day is a thousand years, but as a thousand years. John Hagee has misapplied this verse in his attempts to determine the time of the Lord's second coming. Since the world was created in six days and each day represents a thousand years, then Jesus must be coming soon since six thousand years have passed. The titles to John Hagee's books give us insight into his views about end time events. **The Battle for Jerusalem.** Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001. **From Daniel to Doomsday.** Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999. "The new age is about to be born, and the most severe contradictions are before us" (p. xi). "Doomsday is approaching" (p. xii). **Day of Deception.** Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997. **Final Dawn over Jerusalem.** Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998. **Beginning of the End: The Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin and the Coming Antichrist.** Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996. "The events of these last months draw me inexorably to the conclusion that the Messiah is coming soon" (p. ix). "The shot that killed Yitzhak Rabin launched Bible prophecies onto the fast track" (p. 8). "We are the terminal generation" (p. 187).
- c. What Peter wanted us to understand by the language he uses in this verse is that nobody can know the mind of God about the end of the age. Neither John Hagee nor Jack Van Impe nor Hal Lindsey nor any other

person can know within a million years when the Lord will return. It is sheer arrogance for anyone to claim he knows.

2. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (3:9).
 - a. "Slack" from *braduno*, to be slow, to tarry. The word is translated "tarry" (1 Tim. 3:15). The word comes from *bradus*, slow.
 - b. There have probably been thousands of people who thought the Lord was slow in fulfilling his promise. How many of the Jews in Egypt wondered if the Lord would ever lead them out of bondage? Some probably also wonder about Christ's coming. Is he not slow in fulfilling his promise? The skeptics in Peter's day expressed such doubt (2 Pet. 3:1-2).
 - c. He is not slow or slack as some men count slackness. We need to realize that God is all-wise and we are not. We have access to his mind only as he has revealed his mind in the scriptures.
 - d. "Longsuffering" from *makrothumei*, *makro*, long, *thumos*, mind. The word means of a long mind. This word appears fourteen times in the New Testament. It is used of God (Rom. 2:4) and of man (Gal. 5:22). It is one characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit. In some verses it is translated "patience" (Heb. 6:12; Jas. 5:10). Our modern word "patience" is an excellent translation of the Greek.
 - e. "Willing" from *boulomai*, wishing or wanting.
 - f. He does not want any to perish.
(A) "Perish" from *apollumi*, to destroy, to

marr, to lose. "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Pet. 3:6).

(B) Since he does not wish that any should perish, will he not save everyone? Philip Gulley and James Mulholland. **If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person.** New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003. These authors use 2 Peter 3:9 to teach universal salvation. "He is patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." But what if they do not come to repentance? Our Lord said, "Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Mt. 11:21). Amos 4 tells of what God had done for his people, but they did not return unto him (Amos 4:6-10). Will God repent for us? He does not wish that any should perish, but he allows us to choose what we shall do (Josh. 24:15).

g. There is no doubt God wants all men to repent, but many of us follow our own stubborn wills. We are not willing to humble ourselves and become obedient to his will. To deny that fact is to be ignorant of God's will or to rebel against it.

3. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (3:10).

a. What a strong statement concerning the

Lord's second coming! "For the day of the Lord will come."

- b. The Lord's second coming is just as certain as his first coming. "I will come again and receive you unto myself" (John 14:3).
 - (A) If the Lord were not coming again, our hope for eternity would be vain. The entire New Testament emphasizes the Lord's second coming.
 - (B) Both Jesus and his apostles spoke of the Lord's coming at the end of the age.
 - (C) Sometimes the Lord's coming does not refer to the second coming. "Remember therefore from whence you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove the candlestick out of his place, except you repent" (Rev. 2:5).
 - (D) "Watch therefore; for you do not know what hour your Lord comes. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be also ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes" (Mt. 24:42-44).
 - (E) "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child: and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:2-3).
- c. "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise."
 - (A) "The heavens" does not refer to the place

of God's abode. It means the physical atmosphere, the stars, the planets, the sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies.

- (B) "Pass away" from *parerchomai*, to pass by.
 - (C) "With a great noise." "Whizzing sound of rapid motion through the air like the flight of a bird, thunder, fierce flame" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 176).
- d. "The elements shall melt with fervent heat."
- (A) The term "elements" comes from the Greek *stoicheia* and means the fundamental composition of an item. The word appears seven times in the New Testament.
 - (1) "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world" (Gal. 4:3).
 - (2) "But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known of God, how can you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto you desire again to be in bondage" (Gal. 4:9)?
 - (3) "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8)?
 - (4) "Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, as you subject to ordinances" (Col. 2:20)?
 - (5) "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and

are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Heb. 5:12).

- (5) The other two appearances of the word are here in 2 Peter (verses 10 and 12).
- (B) "Fervent heat" was originally used of a burning fever. "It may perhaps be intended to denote a conflagration arising from internal heat, such as a volcano."
- e. "The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- (A) Melt with fervent heat shows the fierceness of the fire. The very elements of which the world is composed will melt. That does not leave any room for the cleansing some religious groups teach.
- (B) "Burned up" from a compound word meaning to burn up or to burn down. Some manuscripts read "shall be found" — a position the Jehovah's Witnesses accept. But it does not make sense with the idea of melting with fervent heat.
4. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (3:11).
- a. "Seeing all these things shall be dissolved."
- (A) "All these things" refers to the heavens which shall pass away with a great noise and the earth and all the works that are therein."
- (B) "Dissolved" from a word meaning to loose. Vine says the word is used of the future demolition of the heavenly bodies (p. 316). It is the same word translated "melt" in verse 10.
- b. "What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness."

- (A) In view of the fact that Christ is coming again and the earth and the works that are contained in it will be burned up, how ought God's people to live?
 - (B) Take special note of the little word "ought" (*dei*), usually translated "must." The word appears 105 times in the New Testament.
 - (1) "These ought you to have done and not to have left the other undone" (Mt. 23:23).
 - (2) "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business" (Lk. 2:49)?
 - (3) "You must be born again" (John 3:7).
 - (4) "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).
 - (5) "How that so laboring you ought to support the weak" (Acts 20:35).
 - (C) The word "must" means it is necessary, it is essential.
 - (D) "Conversation" means manner of life. God demands that we be holy. How can those who believe in salvation by grace alone demand that we must do anything? If we must do anything, salvation cannot be by grace alone.
 - (E) "Godliness" from *eusebeiasis*, piety.
5. "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (3:12).
- a. "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God."
 - (A) "Looking" from *prosdokao*, "expecting," "waiting for." The word literally means to think (*dokeo*) toward (*pros*).
 - (B) "Hasting" from *speudontas*, "earnestly

desiring," from *speudo*, to speed, to hasten.

- (C) "The day of the Lord" in this context has to mean the Lord's second coming.
- b. "Wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved."
(A) The heavens will be on fire. The very atmosphere will burn up and pass away.
(B) "Dissolved" is the same word in verse 11. It will be loosed and disappear.
- c. "And the elements shall melt with fervent heat."
(A) This is very similar to verse ten, although the word "melt" does not appear in the Greek original in that verse.
(B) "Melt" from the Greek *teketai*, from *teko* meaning to turn into a liquid.
6. "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness" (3:13).
- a. "The promise" Peter had in mind appears in Isaiah 65:17ff. and Isaiah 62:22. "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isa. 65:17). "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain" (Isa. 66:22).
- b. We do not know how the new heavens and the new earth shall appear, but we know they will come.
- c. In the new heavens and the new earth, will dwell righteousness. The word "dwell" means to have its home—to make its abode.
- d. Nothing immoral or corrupt or evil can dwell in the heavenly home. That means we must

get ready to live with God throughout eternity.

D. Exhortations based on the Lord's second coming (3:14-18).

1. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (3:14).

a. The word "wherefore" suggests that what has gone before demands certain responsibilities. Peter is drawing a conclusion based on what he has said about the Lord's second coming and the end of the age.

b. The word "beloved" shows the care and concern Peter had for his fellow Christians. He wanted them to be ready for the Lord when he comes. Should that not be the desire of every child of God?

c. The Lord has made many promises concerning his second coming. Christians should be looking for the fulfillment of the Lord's promises.

d. Because he is coming, we must be "diligent" that we may be found in peace.

(A) The word "diligent" demands maximum effort.

(B) "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure" (1 Pet. 1:10).

e. If we are to be found in peace, without spot, and blameless, that is the way we must live. There is no room in the Christian's life for indifference and carelessness. We must live continuously with the Lord's will in our minds. "I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). Should that not be the way we live?

f. "Without spot, and blameless."

- (A) "Without spot" from *aspilos*, *a*, and *spilos*, spot.
- (1) "That you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. 6:14).
 - (2) "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Lord Jesus Christ is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).
 - (3) "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19).
- (B) "Blameless."
- (1) "Blameless" from *amometos* and is used one other time only in the New Testament.
 - (2) "That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).
2. "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you" (3:15).
- a. The word "count" means to account, to consider. The Greek (*hegeomai*) appears in the Greek twenty-eight times. It is translated "think," "esteem," "supposed," "judged," "that have the rule over" and "meet." "Let each esteem others better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).
 - b. "Longsuffering" from *makrothumia*, literally of a long mind. "Patience" is a good trans-

lation of the Greek. The King James always renders the Greek "longsuffering." The verb form (*makrothumeo*) is translated "have patience," "bear long," and "suffers long."

- c. What if God wipes us off the face of the earth when we first sin. There would not be many of us left. But he suffers long because he loves us. An example: His patience with the nation of Israel.
- d. Peter calls Paul "our beloved brother."
 - (A) For a long time, liberal theologians thought Paul and Peter were bitter enemies.
 - (B) The liberal theologians used several lines of arguments.
 - (1) They each had separate territories. Peter's work was primarily among the Jews and Paul's among the Gentiles. "But contrariwise, when they saw the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter. For he wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:7-8).
 - (2) Paul's rebuke of Peter for his hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14). How could Peter be friendly toward Paul after such a severe rebuke?
 - (3) The book of Acts is divided pretty evenly between the preaching of Peter and of Paul. The first twelve chapters of Acts record primarily the work of the apostle Peter; the rest of the book records the preaching of Paul.
 - (C) If any of this made sense, why would

Peter refer to Paul as "our beloved brother?"

- e. "According to the wisdom given unto him has written unto you."
 - (A) If there had been any enmity between these two apostles, is it likely Peter would have written so glowingly of his enemy?
 - (B) Peter recognized that Paul was writing according to the wisdom God had given him.
 - (C) Even though Paul was not one of the original twelve, he was not a "johnny-come-lately." "For I suppose that I was not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5).
- 3. "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in the which are some things hard to be understood, which they who are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (3:16).
 - a. "As also in all his epistles."
 - (A) There have been those who criticized this statement. They maintain that Paul had not written all his epistles by the time 2 Peter was published. Peter does not say that Paul had completed all his epistles, but in the epistles that involved the same topic Peter discussed in this book, Paul had written on that topic in his epistles. We know Paul discussed some of the same topics Peter did, but we do not know which epistles he had in mind.
 - (B) We know Paul spoke of the second coming, of God's goodness and longsuffering. Peter may have had these and other topics in mind.
 - b. "Speaking in them of these things." Peter was

telling his readers that he and Paul were teaching the same truths.

- c. "In which are some things hard to be understood."
- (A) "Hard to be understood" from *dusnoeta*, used only this one time in the New Testament.
 - (B) Peter did not say he disagreed with Paul or had difficulty understanding Paul's writings. He knew some of them were not easy to understand. Some parts of the book of Romans are hard to understand.
 - (C) Just because a book is hard to understand does not mean we should forget about it. If that were the case, we would not bother to investigate Revelation. Once we have worked on a difficult passage until it becomes plain, we often profit more than from some of the simpler passages.
- d. "Which they who are unlearned and unstable wrest."
- (A) "Unlearned" *amatheis*, *a*, not, and *mathiano*, to learn. This is the only time the word appears in the New Testament but it was used in literature that was contemporaneous with the New Testament. The Bible uses several other words for "ignorant."
 - (1) *Agnoia*...literally, want of knowledge. "And now brethren, I know through ignorance you did it, as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17).
 - (2) *Idiotes* means primarily a private person who is without professional knowledge, unskilled, uneducated. The word was used of Peter and John, and perceived that they were un-

learned (*agrammattoi*: unlettered in the schools) and ignorant (*idiotai*: a private person). Neither word means the apostles were not smart people. The word *idiotes* comes from *idios*, his own.

- (B) "Unstable" from *asterikoi*, *a*, negative, *sterizo*, to fix. Some versions render the word "unsteadfast." These are people who are blown about by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14).
- (C) "Wrest" from *streblousin*, *strebloo*, to twist, to turn. The word "is used here of those who twist the scriptures from their intended purpose in order to make them teach matters never intended by the sacred writers" (Guy N. Woods, p. 191). It would take weeks to provide a list of the many attempts that have been made to twist the scriptures to suit the beliefs of certain groups.
- (1) Jehovah's Witnesses have given a translation of the Bible that deliberately twists the original. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God" (John 1:1).
 - (2) One version renders the word *sarx* (flesh) "sinful nature." That may be what it means, but that is not what it says. That is an attempt to introduce Calvinism into the sacred text.
 - (3) Ron Rhodes. **The Challenges of the Cults and New Religions**. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
 - a. "It would seem that 'born of the water' in verse 5 is parallel to 'born of the flesh' in verse 6, just

- as 'born of the Spirit' in verse 5 is parallel to 'born of the Spirit' in verse 6....The verse has nothing whatsoever to do with water baptism as a requirement for salvation" (p. 274).
- (b) "Salvation is said to be by faith alone close to 200 times in the New Testament" (p. 275).
- (c) Dr. Rhodes says concerning Acts 2:38: "Properly understood, however, this verse does not teach that baptism is a requirement for salvation" (p. 272).
- (4) Philip Gulley and James Mulholland. **If Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person.** New York: Harper-Collins Publisher, 2003.
- (a) "All peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). Does that mean all people will eventually be saved?
- (b) "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt. 12:50).
- (c) "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10).
- (d) "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto all men" (Tit. 2:11).
- (5) Hundreds of other examples could be given. Our left-leaning brothers and sisters often wrest the scriptures.
- (6) What a sad day it will be in the final judgment when we have to give an account of our preaching! We must not pervert the gospel (Gal. 1:7-9).

(D) "As they also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."

(1) Peter's writings were not the only ones some were twisting or wresting.

(2) "The other scriptures." Would not that expression mean that Peter's writings were scripture?

(a) "As they do the rest of the scriptures" (McCord).

(b) "There is no doubt that the apostles claimed to speak by the help of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16) just as the prophets of old did (2 Pet. 1:20f.). Note *loipas* (rest) here rather than *allos* (other). Peter thus puts Paul's epistles on the same plane with the Old Testament, which was also misused" (Mt. 5:21-44; 15:3-6; 19:3-10) (Robertson, volume 6, p. 179).

(c) By using the expression, "the rest of the scriptures" or "the other scriptures," "we cannot escape the conclusion that the epistles of Paul are classed with these. The intention of the author of 2 Peter seems to be to regard the Pauline epistles, or those of them that he knew, as *graphai* (writings or scripture) because they were read in the churches along with the lessons from the Old Testament (Lanski, p. 356).

(3) They twist or wrest the scriptures to their own destruction.

(a) "Destruction" from *apoleia*, utter

ruin, one bound to hell and to be lost.

- (b) The word is used twenty times in the New Testament and is translated "waste," "perdition," "damnable," "pernicious," and "waste."
- (c) The word appears six times in 2 Peter.

4. "You, therefore, beloved, seeing that you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness" (3:17).

a. "You therefore, beloved, seeing that you know these things before."

(A) Although Peter has used very harsh language in this epistle, he wants his readers to know of his love for them. He calls them "beloved."

(B) He warns them of the dangers they face from false teachers. He uses the Greek *proginosko*. "Who verily was foreordained (*prognosmenou*: foreknown) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last days" (1 Pet. 1:20).

(C) Since they knew what could occur, they should have been forearmed for their temptations and trials.

b. "Beware lest you also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

(A) The Greek word translated "beware" is not the usual one. The word *phulasso* means to be on guard. The word appears thirty times in the New Testament and is translated "kept," "observed," and "saved." If the dangers we face are purely theoretical, why the warnings?

- (B) "Led away" or "carried away" shows that a child of God is in grave danger from false teachers.
 - (C) It ought to be obvious that one can be carried away with the error of heretics. "Error" from *planei* from which we get our word "planet."
 - (D) "Fall" from *ekpipto*, old verb to fall out or away. The New Testament uses the word thirteen times.
 - (1) "Charity never fails" (1 Cor. 13:8).
 - (2) "You are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4).
 - (3) "The flower thereof falls away" (1 Pet. 1:24).
 - (E) "Steadfastness" from *sterizo*, stability, fixed, be established, strengthen.
5. "But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen" (3:18).
- a. Rather than being carried away with error, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
 - (A) There is never a time when a Christian can retire from learning and becoming more spiritual.
 - (B) The Hebrew Christians were still babies (Heb. 5:12–6:1).
 - (C) "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).
 - b. We are to grow in both grace and in the knowledge of Christ. This requires great effort on our part.
 - c. Peter refers to Christ as "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Each of these expressions is very important.
 - d. "To him be glory both now and forever."
 - e. "Amen" means let it be so or so be it.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 2 Peter 3

- 1 What was the apostle Peter's reason for writing this second letter?
- 2 Who were the "scoffers" that were to come in the last days? When are the "last days" and what were the scoffers saying?
- 3 Have "all things continued as they were from the beginning of creation?"
- 4 The scoffers were willingly ignorant of what?
- 5 Was the flood universal or did it occur only in the Mediterranean areas? Prove your answer from the scriptures.
- 6 There will not be another universal flood. How will the world be destroyed?
- 7 The New Testament strongly emphasizes the Lord's second coming. Can we know when that great event will occur?
- 8 Even though we cannot know the time of the Lord's return, we know He always fulfills His promises. Explain.
- 9 Discuss: God is longsuffering so that all should come to repentance.
- 10 Some religious teachers insist that the earth will simply be cleansed. Show that Peter's language cannot bear the interpretation.
- 11 If it were important for us to know the time of the Lord's second coming we would have been given that information. Since we cannot know, what is most important about His second coming?
- 12 What does the word "conversation" mean?
- 13 Discuss: "Be ye ever ready to give an account of him that call you to peace, without spot, and blameless."
- 14 Some theologians claim there was animosity between Peter and Paul. How do we know that was not true?
- 15 Are some biblical teachings hard to understand? Does that mean we should not strive to understand them?

- 16 Explain: "Which some who are unlearned and unstable wrest...unto their own destruction."
- 17 If a Christian is led away into error and falls from his own steadfastness, is his soul in danger?
- 18 Nobody-not even the most educated preachers or theologians-knows all they need to know. What does Peter instruct Christians to do?

1 John

Chapter 1

The Epistle Of 1 John

CHAPTER 1

A. Introduction (1:1-4).

1. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life" (1:1).

a. Most serious students of the Bible recognize the similarity between this introduction and that of the gospel of John. Some of the concepts and words in both introductions are the same.

(A) "Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). John tells us who the Word is (John 1:14).

(B) "Beginning." "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). Both introductions harmonize with the very first verse of the Bible (Gen. 1:1).

(C) "Life." "In him was life; and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

(D) "Behold." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

(E) "Manifested." "And the light shines in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). The Greek word *phaino* means to shine or to give light.

b. "That" – not "he" which was from the

- beginning. Why did John use the neuter rather than the masculine?
- (A) It is "an affirmation of the eternal character" (Guy N. Woods, p. 210).
 - (B) "Such usage of the neuter would certainly include all one would think of this God-man: a flesh-and-blood man with all the attributes of deity, characteristics of humanity. Say it either way; this unique person compassed both time and eternity, earth and heaven, God and man" (Lanier, p. 5).
- c. "From the beginning."
- (A) Sometimes the expression, "in the beginning," refers to the beginning of time (Gen. 1:1; John 1:1).
 - (B) It can also mean the beginning of the gospel (Phil. 4:15).
 - (C) "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning" (1 John 2:7).
 - (D) "He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).
- d. "Which we have heard."
- (A) Who are the "we?" Is there merely a literary device? Could he be speaking of the apostles?
 - (B) John spent a great amount of time listening to Jesus teach.
 - (C) "And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in Holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:18).

- e. "Which we have seen with our eyes."
- (A) John was not depending on rumor or even on reputable witnesses; he was there and saw many of Christ's miracles and heard much of his teaching.
 - (B) "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (2 Pet. 1:16).
 - (C) We know that our eyes can deceive us, especially if we are anticipating an event or person. Did you know, for example, that thousands and thousands of people claim to have seen dead loved ones—not in dreams—but in actuality?
- f. "Which we have looked upon."
- (A) John uses a different word than in the preceding phrase, "we have seen with our eyes" (*horao*).
 - (B) "Looked upon" from *theaomai* from which we get our word theater. It was a spectacle that the apostles actually witnessed.
- g. "Our hands have handled."
- (A) They saw, they heard and they touched.
 - (B) Jesus used this same verb when he wanted others to know that he was not spirit (Lk. 24:39).
 - (C) These methods of discovering truth—hearing, seeing and touching—are called "empirical proofs." These kinds of proofs are certainly valid, but they are not always adequate.
- h. "Of the Word of life."
- (A) How does one handle the Word? "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us; (and we beheld his glory, the glory

as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

- (B) Was John using the kind of language we have studied to counteract the teachings of the Gnostics? They believed that Jesus only seemed to be a man. He did not actually take on him the seed of Adam.
2. "(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was manifested unto us;)" (1:2).
 - a. The life which Jesus came to bring men was actually manifested—made to shine. It became obvious to all who were willing to open their ears and eyes and examine who he was.
 - b. "We have seen it." Again emphasizing that John was an eyewitness. If he were not an eyewitness, what did he have to gain?
 - c. What the apostles heard, saw and touched they wanted to show to others. The word "show" comes from the Greek work meaning to announce or to declare or report. The early Christians were committed to teaching others the way of life. They were not content to keep it a secret from the world.
 3. "That which we have seen and heard declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1:3).
 - a. The Holy Spirit knew the threats to the church that had arisen in the first century and that would arise in future generations. So he strongly emphasized the seeing and hearing of the apostles and others.
 - b. "Declare" from the word meaning to an-

- nounce. The word is translated "tell" (Mk. 4:19), "will show" (John 16:13), "rehearsed" (Acts 14:27) and "are reported" (1 Pet. 1:12).
- c. The word was not revealed to the apostles for them to keep secret. They were to go everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:4).
 - d. One of the purposes of Christ's appearances and of the apostles' preaching was that we may have fellowship with them.
 - (A) The word "fellowship" (*koinonia*) means to have something in common. What do we have in common with the apostles? We have Jesus Christ and his word.
 - (B) When we have fellowship with the apostles, we also have fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.
 - (C) "What fellowship (*metoche*: partnership-ESV) has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion (*koinonia*) has light with darkness" (2 Cor. 6:14)?
 - (D) Can any greater honor and blessing come to man than to have fellowship with God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ? Can we have fellowship with them if we do not practice what the New Testament teaches?
4. "And these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full" (1:4).
- a. Over and over John uses the word "write" (*grapho*) in this epistle (13 times). Does the fact that the Holy Spirit guided John in writing this book mean that its contents are infallible?
 - b. The writings of the apostles and others whom God chose to reveal his word are just as meaningful and applicable as the very words of Christ himself.

- c. One of the purposes of John's writings was that the early disciples might have full joy. The fact that they and we can know for sure that what they describe actually happened should fill our hearts with joy. If none of this is true, however, or if we cannot be sure it is true, how can we experience joy?
 - d. We must stress that being faithful to our Lord should be joy. The Philippian letter makes that truth very plain. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).
5. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1:5).
- a. John repeats for emphasis the points he has made in the preceding verses. "The message we have heard."
 - b. The content of apostolic preaching to some extent is outlined in these verses. We must continually stress the incarnation of our Lord and that men and women saw, heard and touched him. He was not a phantom or a figment of someone's imagination. He was just as human as you and me. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
 - c. The message (*angelia*) was: God is light and in him is no darkness.
 - (A) The word "light" (*phos*) appears seventy times in the New Testament, thirty-one times in John's writings.
 - (1) "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in

darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not....The same came for a witness, to bear witness to the Light, that all men through him might believe" (John 1:4-5, 7).

(2) Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

(B) It is impossible that any darkness can exist in God almighty. So can any of His word be false or deceptive or wrong?

B. Christians must walk in the light (1:5-7).

1. Verse five belongs in this division. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."

2. John uses six conditional statements beginning with the word "if."

(A) "If we say we have fellowship..." (1:6).

(B) "If we walk in the light..." (1:7).

(C) "If we say we have no sin..." (1:8).

(D) "If we confess our sins..." (1:9).

(E) "If we say we have not sinned..." (1:10).

(F) "If any man sin..." (2:1).

3. Each of these conditional statements is called condition of the third class. "The third class conditional sentence is the condition undetermined, but with the prospect of determination" (Davis, p. 88).

4. "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (1:6).

(A) Saying and doing are two different things. It is much easier to say than to do.

(B) 1 John uses the word "do" (*poieo*) eleven times. The word is also translated "make" and "commit." ESV translates the word "practice" in some cases.

- (C) Claiming to have fellowship with God and walking in darkness reveals inconsistency in people's lives. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10). "Not everyone who says...but he who does" (Mt. 7:21).
- (D) "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth" (ESV).
5. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1:7).
- The verb tenses in this verse are vital to our understanding of its meaning and application.
 - "Walk" is present tense and involves continuous action.
 - Charles Williams' translation is one of the few that takes the tenses into consideration. "But if we continue to live in the light, just as He is in the light, we have unbroken fellowship with one another, and the blood of Christ his Son continues to cleanse us from every sin." Questions on this verse.
 - What does it mean to walk or to live in the light? Psalm 119:105.
 - If we do not continue to live in the light, will the blood of Christ continue to cleanse us?
 - Does this verse teach that salvation is unconditional?
6. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1:8).
- Those people who claim sinlessness have either

- not read this verse or do not believe it. John Wesley preached the doctrine of perfectionism.
- b. "If we claim, 'We are already free from sin,' we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in our hearts" (Williams).
 - c. Contrary to the teachings of John Calvin and Martin Luther, we are not born in sin, but all become sinners.
 - (A) "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:12). This verse is based on Psalm 14:3.
 - (B) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "Have sinned" is past tense; "come short" is present tense. We continually come short of the glory of God.
7. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9).
- a. "Confess" is present active subjunctive, if we keep on confessing our sins." Since we continually come short of the glory of God, we must continually confess our sins.
 - b. What if our Lord did not forgive us when we sin? We would of all men be most miserable.
 - c. The expression, "he is faithful," is a prominent theme—both in the Old Testament and in the New. "There has no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

- d. If we keep on confessing, he keeps on forgiving and keeps on cleansing us from all unrighteousness.
8. "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1:10).
- a. God says we all have sinned – no exception (Rom. 3:9-23).
 - b. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar. Accusing God of lying or being mistaken about any topic is a very serious matter.
 - c. But are we not making God a liar when we argue that the word of God is wrong on any topic?

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 John 1

- 1 Who is "the Word of life?"
- 2 Genesis 1:1; John 1:1 and 1 John 1:1 speak of "the beginning." Discuss.
- 3 The apostles—including John—had "heard," "seen," "looked upon" and their hands had "handled" the Word of life. How important are these concepts in discussing the fact that Jesus actually lived and walked among men?
- 4 What is the meaning of "fellowship?"
- 5 John strongly emphasizes light and darkness. What does he mean by these concepts?
- 6 John stresses being consistent in our profession and in our behavior. Discuss the conditional statements in 1 John 1.
- 7 How are Christians continually cleansed?
- 8 Some religious groups have taught the doctrine of perfectionism. Is it possible to harmonize that doctrine with 1 John 1:8?
- 9 When we sin—not if we sin—God has provided a way for us to be forgiven. Explain.
- 10 If men claim they have never sinned, what are they actually saying?

Chapter 2

The Epistle Of 1 John

CHAPTER 2

- A. Christ our atoning sacrifice (2:1-2).
1. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (2:1).
 - a. At the time of John's writing this book, he almost certainly was an old man. He had probably baptized many of the people to whom the letter was addressed. This may explain why he calls them "my little children." There is a tenderness in these words from the aged apostle.
 - b. Seven times John refers to his readers as "children," but it is not used in a derogatory sense.
 - c. The purpose of this epistle could hardly be plainer: "That you sin not."
 - (A) But will not the grace of Christ cover our sins, even if we deliberately persist in them?
 - (B) That excuse has been used by homosexuals, adulterers, fornicators, and others. "I know it is wrong, but God's grace will take care of it." Such an attitude borders on blasphemy.
 - d. John, like Paul, recognizes that no man lives entirely free from sin. So he assures us: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

- (A) When we sin—not if we sin—we have we have an advocate.
- (1) “Advocate” from *paracleton*, *paraclete*. The word means someone you can call to your side for comfort, encouragement and support.
 - (2) That is the same word translated, “comforter” in reference to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 16:7).
- (B) A. T. Robertson (**Word Pictures**, volume 6, p. 209). “John has no patience with professional perfectionists (John 1:8-10), but he has still less with loose-livers like some of the Gnostics who went to all sorts of excesses without shame.”
- (C) The one who is our advocate—counsel for the defense—is none other than Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the one who pleads our cause (Williams). He will never leave us or forsake us.
2. “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world” (2:2).
- a. If we have no sins or if our sins will not condemn us, why do we need God to provide a propitiation for our sins?
 - b. “Propitiation” from **hilasmos**, a sacrifice, a mercy seat.
 - (A) **Hilaskomai** is translated “to make reconciliation” (Heb. 2:7) and “be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13).
 - (B) **Hilasterion** means a propitiatory place, a mercy seat. The word appears only one time. “And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Heb. 9:5).

- c. But Jesus Christ is not the sacrifice for our sins only, but the sins of the whole world.
 - (A) The benefits of the death of Christ extend to all people for all time. If we believe in Him and obey the gospel, His blood covers our sins.
 - (B) The doctrine of limited atonement cannot be reconciled with this verse and with many other passages.
 - (1) "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:3-4).
 - (2) "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). But Christ's atonement is limited, why would it matter if some men did not come to the knowledge of the truth or repent?
- B. What knowing God means (2:3-6).
 - 1. "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (2:3).
 - a. "Know" (**ginosko**) means to have an intimate knowledge of God and to walk with God.
 - (A) "And Enoch walked with God after he begot Methuselah three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. 5:22-24).
 - (B) "By faith Enoch was translated (or changed) that he should not see death;

and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Heb. 11:5).

- (C) We can know that we know Him.
- (D) A summary of John's use of the word "know."

- (1) **Ginosko** - 77 times.
- (2) **Gnorizo** - 2 times (made known).
- (3) **Gnosis** - Knowledge (none).
- (4) **Eideo** - Hundreds of times (full knowledge).
- (5) These words show that those who claim we cannot know to be in grievous error.

- b. But can we know that we know Him if we not keep His commandments?

- (A) We must keep on keeping His commandments.

- (B) "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). If we continue to love Christ, we will continue to keep His commandments.

- (C) "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:2-3).

- (D) Keeping God's commandments does not earn anyone salvation, but keeping them is absolutely essential. The commandments of God are not mere suggestions.

- 2. "He who says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (2:4).

- a. In the eyes of many modern theologians, John's language is entirely too negative. How can we win friends and influence people by being so harsh?
 - b. If we claim to love Jesus Christ, but do not honor His will by obeying, we are lying.
 - c. John speaks very bluntly, but he wanted his readers to know just how serious the situation was. Failing to obey God means we do not love Him. How can anyone get salvation by grace alone through faith alone from this book?
3. "But whoso keeps his words, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in him" (2:5).
- a. Whoso keeps on keeping His word (present active subjunctive). This truth ought to tell us just how important the word of God is.
 - b. The word "whoso" tells us that no one has an exclusive right to salvation through Christ. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).
 - c. "Perfected" from *teleioo*, stands completed, achieved its goal. The word never means sinless, flawless.
 - d. "Hereby we know that we are in him."
 - (A) Take note again at John's use of the word "know."
 - (B) To be in Him means to be in the church where all spiritual blessings are (Eph. 1:3). Salvation is in Christ and in Christ alone.
 - (C) By continually keeping God's commandments, we can know that we are in Christ—that we are walking in the light.
4. "He who says he abides in him ought himself so to walk, even as he walked" (2:6).

- a. "Abide" from **meno**, to remain, to continue. Our word endurance comes from **hupomeno**, to abide under.
 - b. Notice again the present tense verbs. "He must keep on walking as Jesus walked." The word "walk" is a synonym for living.
- C. An old and new commandment (2:7-8).
1. "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you have heard from the beginning" (2:7).
 - a. The word "new" comes from the Greek **kainen** and means not novel or new in kind.
 - b. The commandment to love God and one's fellowmen is taught in the Mosaic covenant. Jesus gave added strength to the commandment both His example and by His teaching.
 - c. "From the beginning" cannot mean from the beginning of time. It refers to what the apostles had heard Jesus teach. "A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).
 2. "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines" (2:8). Literally, darkness is passing away.
 - a. The commandment to love is old, as old as the story of Cain and Abel, but new in practice. It even extends to loving one's enemies.
 - b. The supreme example of what genuine love means can be seen in Christ and in the apostles when they imitated Christ.
- D. The love test (2:9-11).
1. "He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness even until now" (2:9).

- a. Did you know that many Klansmen claim to be Christians—to be true followers of Jesus Christ—and yet hate almost anyone who differs from them. Some of them claim not to hate blacks and Jews, but their claims are empty.
 - b. Claiming to be in Christ—to be in the light—is no sure sign that one is in the light.
 - c. We must demonstrate that we are in the light by loving our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - d. What a real tragedy to hate one's fellowmen! There are millions of our fellowmen—including many who call themselves Christians—who hate others.
2. "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no occasion for stumbling in him" (2:10).
 - a. Does John mean to leave the impression that all one has to do to please God is to love his brothers?
 - b. We must take all the Bible teaches and not just the part that pleases us or is easy to do.
 - c. He who continues to love his brother is always in the light.
 - d. "But whoever continues to love his brother is always in the light, and he is no hindrance to others" (Williams).
 - e. "Stumbling" is from the Greek **skandalon**, a stumbling block. He does not stumble himself and he does not lead others to stumble. The Greek is rendered "things that offend" (Matt. 13:41); "offense" (Matt. 16:23); "occasion to fall" (Rom. 14:13) and "stumbling block" (Rom. 11:9; 1 Cor. 1:23; Rev. 2:14).
 3. "But he who hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and does not know where

- he goes, because that darkness has blinded him" (2:11).
- a. How could John be more explicit in his opposition to evil? This verse repeats and stresses the truths he has already presented.
 - b. A new version of the New Testament, **The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), does not use the word "darkness" for fear of offending dark skinned people (p. xv of the Introduction).
 - c. Anyone who does not obey the gospel and emulate Jesus Christ is walking in darkness, regardless of his ability or education. So long as he does not become a Christian, he continues to walk in darkness.
 - d. John offers this truth as an explanation of the evil that characterizes some Christians and others who are not Christians.
 - e. He does not know where he is going because he does not have the light of the gospel. The darkness has blinded his eyes.
 - f. "In whom the god of his world has blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).
- E. Encouragement to different groups in the church (2:12-14).
1. "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake" (2:12).
 - a. The importance of the written word is emphasized in these verses.

(A) Some modern theologians doubt that lowly human beings like us can understand the scriptures. John did not share that view of the word.

- (B) How else could God communicate His message across the centuries?
- b. "Little children" does not refer to the age of the recipients of this letter. John's age and the fact that he had no doubt taught many of them the gospel probably influenced the use of this language.
 - c. John seeks to encourage his readers by reminding them that their sins have been forgiven. The fact of forgiveness should spur all of us to greater service.
 - d. "Forgiveness" from **aphiemi**, to send away. The word is also translated, "remission" (Acts 2:38).
 - e. Our sins are forgiven for His name's sake. Because of who God and Christ are and what they have done for us, we should be diligent in His service.
2. "I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father" (2:13).
- a. The term, "fathers," probably referred to the older, more mature members of the church.
 - b. The verb says they have known Him and still know Him.
 - c. "Young men" may have meant the less mature Christians. John was providing encouragement to the young people who had learned about Christ and had obeyed the gospel. He knew the struggles young people have to endure. That does not mean that John thought they had it made, but they were on the right course.

- d. These young people had overcome the wicked one—Satan—but still needed strengthening and stabilizing.
- (A) “Overcome” from **nikao** to win the victory. The tense of the verb (perfect active indicative) indicates a permanent victory after the conflict. **Nikao** is used twenty-eight times and is almost always translated “overcome” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).
- (1) “And one of the elders says unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, **has prevailed** to open the book, and to loose the seven seals” (Rev. 5:5).
- (2) “And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he who sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth to **conquering** and to **conquer**” (Rev. 6:2).
- (3) “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them **who had gotten the victory** over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having harps in their hands” (Rev. 15:2).
- (B) “He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
- d. “Little children” almost certainly applied to the whole group. “You have known the Father.” Literally, “you have come to know the Father and you still know him.”

3. "I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (2:14).
 - a. Why John changes tenses from the present to the aorist (past) I do not know. Could it be that he revised his manuscript before he sent it to his readers?
 - b. Nothing new – except the change in tenses – is added.
 - c. The young men are described as being strong. Yet they needed God's strength to keep on overcoming Satan. Without God's strength, no one would be able to overcome the world.
 - d. So long as the word abides in us in an active way, we are not going to follow Satan and be misled by the world.
 - e. "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin (literally do not make habit of sinning); for his seed remains in him and he cannot sin (cannot continue to sin), because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).
 - f. The word is powerful (Heb. 4:12), but it cannot prevent our leaving the faith and turning to evil.
 - g. "You have overcome the wicked one." A repeat of verse 13. John uses repetition a great amount in his writing.
- F. A warning against worldliness (2:15-17).
 1. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).
 - a. "Love" from **agapao** (present active imperative with **me**) and signifies either stop

- loving the world or do not get in the habit of loving the world.
- b. "World" from **kosmos** and refers to what is commonly called "worldliness." (cf. James 4:4). James mentions friendship with the world.
 - c. The things of the world are outlined in verse 16.
 - d. "If any man keep on loving the world."
 - e. "The love of the Father" refers to our love for Him (objective genitive) and not His love for us. Objective genitive suggests that the object receives the action.
 - f. It is true that God's love for us cannot dwell in us if we are devoted to the world, but here John has in mind God's love for us.
2. "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (2:16).
 - a. When John uses the world "world," he is not speaking of the material universe and the people who live in it. He is speaking of attachment to worldly activities.
 - b. "The lust of the flesh" is subjective genitive and refers to what we allow our fleshly appetites to drive us to do.
 - (A) "Flesh" does not mean our physical bodies, but the darker side of our nature. The NIV renders the Greek "sinful nature" – an interpretation rather than a translation.
 - (B) The lusts of the flesh can be understood by reading Paul's list (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - c. "The lust of the eye" (also subjective genitive), that is the lust with the eyes are organs.
 - (A) What about X- and R-rated movies, some television programs, pornography?

- (B) "But I say unto you, That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 28). Adultery is wrong, but so is thinking adultery.
- d. "The pride of life" has been variously translated: "the boastful pride of life" (NASB); "proud pretensions of life" (Williams). The expression can be translated "the vain glory of life." "The pride of one's possessions" (Hugo McCord).
 - e. The attitudes and actions John mentions in this verse do not belong to the Father, but are of the world. Those who argue that the grace of God will cover these transgressions have completely misread scripture.
3. "And the world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (2:17).
 - a. People who believe they are having a good time drinking, gambling, committing adultery, and such like, are deceiving themselves. These will all end in eternal damnation.
 - b. Even if the world provides fulfillment and joy for a lifetime, it is going to pass away (Heb. 10:25-27). There will be a judgment.
 - c. "He who does the will of God abides forever."
 - (A) John uses some form of the word "do" (*poieo*) eleven times. Sometimes the word is translated "make" (1 John 1:10). No one can get salvation by grace alone through faith alone from 1 John.
 - (B) If we must do the will of God to live forever, what will happen to us if we cease doing the will of God?
 - d. If we are not going to be raised from the

dead to live with God forever, what difference does disobedience make?

(A) Why deny oneself any pleasure? "Let us eat, and drink; for tomorrow we die" (1 Cor. 15:32).

(B) Why make any sacrifice if we are going to remain in the grave forever? "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it if the dead rise not" (1 Cor. 15:32).

G. Warnings concerning antichrists (2:18-29).

1. "Little children, it is the last time: and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know it is the last time" (2:18).

a. There are few topics on which so much foolishness is taught than on the antichrist.

(A) Many television preachers identify him with the "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3), although there is not any evidence to sustain that view.

(B) Dozens of people have been nominated for the honor of being the antichrist:

(1) Martin Luther thought the pope was the antichrist. I believe Alexander Campbell took the same position.

(2) The pope said Martin Luther was the antichrist.

(3) Hitler, Dr. Kissinger, Ronald Wilson Reagan (666: there are six letters in each of his names). The truth is: There have been hundreds maybe thousands of antichrists, that is, that people who were against Christ. John Shelby Spong is an antichrist because he denies many of the fundamentals

of the Christian's faith.

- b. Notice again John's use of the expression, "little children."
- c. "Last time" from **eschate hora estin**, literally, the last hour (**hora**). What does the "last hour" or the "last time" mean? Many theories have been proposed.
 - (A) The end of the Jewish age. This had already occurred when John wrote.
 - (B) The end of the world. How could God have had this in mind since it has been 2,000 years since He wrote.
 - (C) "The last hour" refers to the last period of God's dealing with man—the Christian era. Any other interpretation involves too many difficulties.
- d. We are not too old who had been preaching the antichrist.
 - (A) The word "antichrist" means "against Christ." It could mean either one who professes to be Christ or one who opposes Christ.
 - (B) The word appears in John's epistles: 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7.
 - (C) "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many...For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets; inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:5, 24).
- e. Because the prophecy concerning the antichrists was being fulfilled, they could know they were living in the same time (or hour). The antichrists could not have been present before the Lord came to earth. Because there were (and are) antichrists, we know that this is God's final dispensation for men.

2. "They went out from us, but were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us" (2:19).
 - a. The Calvinists have used this verse to try to prove that a child of God cannot so sin as to be lost.
 - b. The word "they" refers to the antichrists that would come or were already present.
 - c. The Greek indicates a going out from the center. If they were not disciples, how could they go out?
 - d. "They went out from our membership...they were not of us in spirit and in life" (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**, Vol. 6, p. 215).
 - e. "It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make" (Albert Barnes, p. 303).
 - f. "These may never have imbibed deeply of the same spirit of obedience and compliance as the remaining ones, but they still once had been a part of Christ" (Roy Lanier, Jr., p. 60).
 - g. If they had truly been committed to Christ, they would not have gone astray. We do not know their reasons for leaving, but they left and apparently became enemies of Christ and His church.
 - h. "They went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."
 - (A) "They had lost the inner fellowship, and then apparently voluntarily broke the outward" (Robertson, Vol. 6, p. 216).

- (B) From their going out, it can be seen that they had forsaken the Lord. They are now revealed in their true light.
3. "But you have an unction of the Holy One, and you know all things" (2:20).
 - a. In contrast to the antichrists who went out because they were not of the same spirit and life, the faithful Christians which remained faithful "had the unction of the Holy One."
 - (A) The word "unction" comes from the Greek **chrisma** (**chrío**: to anoint). **Christos** (Christ) means one who is anointed. Christians are anointed ones (**christoi**).
 - (B) The anointing comes from Jesus Christ, the Holy One.
 - b. Some manuscripts read: "You all know it." If the King James Version is correct, the apostle was speaking of our knowing all things pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). "All of you are informed" (Hugo McCord).
 4. "I have not written unto you because you know not the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (2:21).
 - a. John knew the members of the church already knew the truth about salvation and they were presently enjoying that salvation that is in Christ alone.
 - b. He wants to enforce and strengthen the truth they know and to encourage them to remember "that no lie is of the truth."
 - (A) John speaks as plainly as any New Testament writer about the dangers of false doctrine and false teachers.
 - (B) He wanted his readers to be alert to lies which were being promoted by various false teachers.

5. "Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son" (2:22).
 - a. Whether a person intends to be a liar when he becomes an antichrist, he is one. The modern theologians who deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, are liars. That is not very pleasant language, but it is what the Bible teaches. That kind of preaching may not be considered very positive.
 - b. We must recognize the exclusiveness of the biblical claim that Jesus is our Savior, our only Savior.
 - c. The antichrist actually denies the Father and the Son.
 - (A) Jesus taught that those who were not for Him were against Him. We cannot straddle the fence in our relationship to Christ.
 - (B) It is not just a matter of denying God the Father; we cannot deny the Son without being guilty of serious sin.
6. "Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father: (but) he who acknowledges the Son, the same does the Father also" (2:23).
 - a. "Denies" is present active indicative, "continues to deny the Son." As long as he denies the Son, he cannot have the Father and cannot be saved.
 - b. Christ reveals the Father (John 1:18; 14:9).
 - c. John 14:1 teaches that faith in the Son is essential for our approval by the Father.
 - d. The last part of this verse was added by the King James translators because they thought it was essential to complete the meaning of John's thought. No other version with

which I am acquainted includes that part of the verse.

7. "Let that therefore abide in you, which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning abide in you, you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (2:24).
 - a. The "that" would refer to the gospel message John discussed in 1 John 1.
 - b. "Abide" is present active imperative, "let it keep on abiding in you."
 - c. If what they had heard remained in them, they would not depart from the faith. That shows how absolutely essential it is that we know the truth and live by it.
 - d. What will happen to those who do not live by the truth? Will they continue in the Father and in the Son? Our salvation is contingent on our faithfulness or else these words from 1 John make no sense.
8. "And this is the promise that he has promised us, even eternal life" (2:25).
 - a. The promise of eternal life is one of those "exceedingly great and precious promises" of which Peter wrote (2 Peter 1:4).
 - b. Some unbelievers and liberal theologians claim there is no life after death, but the one who came down from heaven assures there is.
 - c. What could be more important than learning what we must do to inherit eternal life? We must know the truth, obey it from the heart to have eternal life.
9. "These things have I written unto you concerning them who seduce you" (2:26).
 - a. Warnings concerning evil and false teachers are considered too negative. We want

- “smooth things”—not right things. The Jews asked Isaiah to prophesy deceit (Isa. 30:10). The problem is we must have right things to save us (John 8:32).
- b. “Seduce” from *planao*, to lead astray. The English word “planet” comes from this Greek word.
 - c. If we cannot be led astray or if it does not matter if we are, as the Calvinists teach, why would John use this language?
 - d. “But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even deny the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (2 Peter 2:1-2).
 - e. Christians must always be alert to false teachers (1 John 4:1).
10. “But the anointing which you have received of him abides in you, and you need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, even as it has taught you, you shall abide in him” (2:27).
- a. The anointing we have received from the Holy Spirit we have received in the word. It was not a mystical or mysterious infilling of the Spirit, but the word that dwells in us.
 - b. There was no need for them to be taught by the false teachers who were disturbing the churches. They had been given all the information they needed to serve God acceptably. They needed nothing more than the word.

- c. The Gnostics could not teach them because the Gnostics denied many of the truths of the gospel.
 - d. The anointing they had received through the word taught them all they needed to know and to do.
 - e. John lays great stress on knowing the truth. If men cannot know the truth, John's statements are useless and even deceptive.
 - f. John strongly stresses the absolute necessity of abiding in Christ.
11. "And now, little children, abide in him: that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (2:28).
- a. A tender appeal for the members of the church to abide in Christ. If they could not do otherwise or if it made no difference if they did not, why the appeal?
 - b. The tense of the verb means "keep on abiding in him."
 - c. We must abide in him so that when he shall appear we may have confidence.
 - (A) "Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).
 - (B) "Appear" from **phaineroo**, to shine, to be manifested.
 - (C) "Confidence" from **parresian**: boldness, courage.
 - (D) The apostles had not been informed of the time of the Lord's return, but they wanted the early Christians to be ready if He came in their lifetime. The same principle applies to us. We do not know when He is coming, but we must be ready for Him when He comes, if He comes while we are still living (2 Peter 3:10-12).

- d. The word “coming” is from the Greek **parousia** which means to come and to stay. The word appears twenty-four times in the Greek New Testament and is always translated either “coming” or “presence.” The word is always translated “coming” when it applies to Christ’s return.
 - e. What a tragedy if any of us were ashamed at the Lord’s coming!
 - (A) If we have been faithful and walked in Him, we shall not be ashamed when He comes.
 - (B) Our guilt would not allow us to stand before Him with boldness (or confidence).
12. “If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does righteousness is born of him” (2:29).
- a. Over and over John stresses our ability to know and the necessity of knowing. We can know because of the revelation we have received.
 - b. “Righteous” means right in the sight of God—not in the eyes of men. Jesus Christ was the only perfectly righteous person who ever lived. He is our model of righteousness.
 - c. Men may perform good deeds without knowing or following Christ, but they cannot be righteous in God’s eyes without submitting to the gospel and obeying its precepts.
 - d. Acts 10:34-35. We must do righteousness.
 - e. If we truly are following the will of God, then we can know that we are born (begotten) of Him.
 - f. “Righteousness” includes all that God requires of men—not what men decide they ought to do.

- g. There is a great mount of confusion on these matters which John would help to clarify – if men would only listen to his words.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 John 2

- 1 Define the word "advocate."
- 2 Define the word "propitiation." For whom is Christ the propitiation?
- 3 Many in the religious world doubt anyone's ability to know. How does John respond to such foolishness?
- 4 How important is keeping the Lord's commandments?
- 5 What does it mean to walk as Christ walked?
- 6 Distinguish between "the new commandment" and "the old commandment."
- 7 Can we be true Christians and hate our brothers?
- 8 Explain: "No occasion of stumbling in him."
- 9 John often uses "darkness" and "light." What does he mean by these terms?
- 10 Who are "little children," "fathers" and "young men?"
- 11 The Apostle John warned his readers about worldliness. We are not supposed to love the world. How does John use the word "world?"
- 12 Explain each of the following concepts: "Lust of the flesh," "lust of the eye" and "pride of life."
- 13 What will happen to the world and those who love the world?
- 14 Discuss the "antichrist."
- 15 What does John mean when he says that certain ones went out from us because they were not of us.
- 16 Explain "the unction of the Spirit."
- 17 If one denies the Father and the Son he is "antichrist." What does that mean?
- 18 John warned of those who would "seduce us." What does he mean by that expression?
- 19 If we cannot fall from grace, why does John urge Christians to abide in Christ?
- 20 What is righteousness? Is righteousness something we do or that is done to us?

Chapter 3

The Epistle Of 1 John

CHAPTER 3

A. God's love for man (3:1-3).

1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world does not know us, because it knew him not" (3:1).
 - a. How utterly impossible it is for fallible and weak human beings to understand the great love God has for us!
 - b. Men had rebelled against God, but in His infinite love and mercy, He gave a plan for the saving of man.
 - c. "Bestowed" from **didomi**, to give. (Perfect active indicative: state of completion.)
 - d. The word **tekna** means children, not sons (**huios**).
 - e. What greater honor could come to the children of men than to be a son or a daughter of God Almighty? Cf. 2 Cor. 6:17-18.
 - f. The world does not know us – that is, they do not understand our motivation and behavior – because it did not understand Christ.
 - g. "Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (1 Peter 4:4). This explains why this world is not our home. We are just passing through.
2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we

shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (3:2).

- a. We become sons of God when we obey the Lord and are born from above (John 3:3-5).
- b. To be a son or a daughter of God means we are heirs of God and fellowheirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17).
- c. We do not have to wait for the Lord's second coming; we are sons "now."
- d. We do not know exactly what we shall be when He appears. "Appears" from **phaneroo**, to manifest, to shine. We have not been shown what we shall be.
- e. Paul mentions new bodies we shall have, but he gives no details (1 Cor. 15:35-50). There is no point in speculating.
- f. Finite human beings would not be able to fully comprehend the message regarding our new bodies and the new home Christ has prepared for us. The Lord has not fully revealed the beauties and glories of that heavenly home.
- g. "But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

(A) There is much about heaven we cannot know because it has not been revealed.

(B) We can know that heaven exists. Rabbi Harold Kushner says we cannot know if there is life after death. Christians can know since we have a revelation from Christ (John 14:1-6).

(C) We can also know that we shall be like Christ.

(1) "Know" from **oida** means we have come to know and we still know. Cf. 2 Tim. 1:12.

- (2) That truth cannot be discerned from Edgar Cayce or any other New Agers. It cannot be learned from mediation. It is known only by divine revelation. So-called NDE's or OBE's give us no knowledge of life after death.
 - h. Our heavenly bodies will be like the glorified body of Jesus Christ.
 - i. After our initial obedience to the gospel, we begin a process of growth that will eventually end in our being like Christ. "Let us go on unto perfection" (Heb. 6:1).
- 3. "And every man who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure" (3:3).
 - a. Our hope which is an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19) is set on Jesus Christ. We know He can sustain that hope and provide eternal life.
 - b. Our hope in Christ motivates us to continue to be pure. **Hagnizo**, present active indicative, keeps on purifying himself.
 - c. "And everyone who has this hope in him tries to make himself as pure as He is" (Williams).
 - d. Christ is the motivation and the object of our living. He provides the goal toward which we are striving.
- B. Sin and righteousness (3:4-10).
 - 1. "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is a transgression of the law" (3:4).
 - a. The word "sin" means missing the mark.
 - b. Both verbs—commits and transgresses—are present tense indicatives. "Whosoever practices sin also practices lawlessness." Continuous action.

- c. The expression, “transgresses also the law,” from **anomia poiei**, practices lawlessness or does lawlessness.
 - d. Sin is a transgression of the law. Literally, sin is lawlessness.
 - e. **Anomia** means without law or lawlessness.
 - f. There has to be a law before there can be a transgression of the law. We are not under the law of Moses, but we are under the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25).
2. “And we know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (3:5).
- a. How can human beings know the purpose for which the Lord came into the world? We know only by divine revelation. “Know” from **oidate**, you have come to know and you still know.
 - b. Our Lord was manifested (**phaneroo**: made to shine, made known).
 - c. Jesus came to take away our sins. “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Cf. Isaiah 53; 1 Peter 2:24. **Airo**: to bear away, to carry away.
 - d. Jesus did not sin. No sin could be found in Him because He was sinless. He never sinned **ever**, in spite of what Hollywood and some modern theologians maintain.
 - (A) “He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks his glory who sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:18).
 - (B) “For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21).
 - (C) “Who did not sin, neither was guile

found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Cf. Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 9:13.

3. "Whoso abides in him sins not: whosoever sins has not seen him, neither known him" (3:6).
 - a. "Whosoever keeps on abiding in him keeps on sinning not."
 - b. "No one who continues to live in union with him practices sin. No one who practices sin has ever seen him or come to know him" (Williams).
 - c. The verbs "has seen" and "known" are Greek perfects, which refers to action in the past with continuing results. "They have never seen him or known him and still do not."
4. "Little children, let no man deceive you: he who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (3:7).
 - a. "Deceive" from **planao**, to go astray (present active imperative), "let no man keep leading you astray."
 - b. Whoever these false teachers were – whether Gnostics or otherwise – they were endangering the souls of those Christians because they were leading them astray.
 - c. If we do righteousness, we are righteous, even as He is righteous.
 - (A) Righteousness is not some quality that God imparts to man; it is doing right according to God's standard of right.
 - (B) Our example of perfect righteousness is Jesus Christ, the righteous (1 John 2:1).
5. "He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of man was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (3:8).
 - a. "Commits" (present active indicative) from **poieo**, to do, to practice. One who practices

- sin (makes a habit of sinning) is of the devil.
- b. The devil sins from the beginning.
 - (A) "You are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).
 - (B) The devil is the chief sinner of all time. We certainly do not want to be his disciples, but we are if we keep on sinning.
 - c. Jesus came into the world to destroy the works of the devil.
 - (A) Jesus was manifested, died on the cross and was raised by the power of God "that he might destroy the works of the devil."
 - (B) If we act like Satan, we are preventing the Lord's gracious acts from saving us.
 - (C) There has been a conflict between the devil and God Almighty for a long time. On whose side do we want to be in the conflict?
6. "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (3:9).
- a. We are "born of the water and the spirit" (John 3:3-5).
 - b. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, who lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).
 - c. "No one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning, because the God-given

- life-principle continues to live in him, and so he cannot practice sinning, because he is born of God" (Williams).
- d. "Does not commit sin" is linear present active indicative as in verse 4. The child of God does not make a habit of sinning (Robertson, **Word Pictures**, Vol. 6, p. 223).
 - e. So long as the seed remains in him, he cannot go on sinning. If the word of God is active in our lives, we are not going to live as we did before we obeyed the gospel.
 - f. "He cannot sin." "A great deal of false theology has grown out of a misunderstanding of the tense of **hamartein** here" (Robertson, p. 223). **Hamartein** is present active infinitive: cannot continue to sin.
 - g. He is a child of God with God's protection. But if he follows the devil, he is lost.
7. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he who does not love his brother" (3:10).
 - a. No one can question whether John was addressing Christians. He would not have used the expression, "children of God," had he been speaking of unbelievers. Cf. John 8:33-44. Pluralists, universalists and other liberals may not be happy with the Lord's language, but it is the truth the Bible teaches throughout.
 - b. "Manifest" from **phaneroo**, to shine, to make visible, to make known. In other words, it ought to be very clear who belongs to God and who belongs to the devil.
 - (A) If the universalists were right, no one would belong to the devil.
 - (B) Why did Jesus have to die if we are all

going to heaven regardless of our behavior?

(C) Philip Gulley and James Mulholland, **Grace Is True: Why God Will Save Every Person** (New York: Harper San Francisco, 2003).

c. How can we discern the difference between the children of God and the children of the devil? "Whosoever does not righteousness is not of God, neither he who does not love his brother."

(A) Righteousness is not what God adds to our account. It is what we do in response to his graciousness. If that were not true, why did John speak of "doing" righteousness (1 John 29; 3:7)? Cf. Acts 10:34-35. Jews and Gentiles alike must do righteousness. One who fails to do righteousness is not of God. How can this verse be harmonized with the doctrine of grace alone?

(B) We are not of God if we do not love our brothers and sisters—not just members of the body of Christ. We will say much more about loving our brothers as we proceed through 1 John.

C. God's message of love (3:11-24).

1. "For this is the message, that you heard from the beginning, that you should love one another" (3:11).

a. If all people are going to be saved—as the Universalists teach—loving one another may be desirable, but it is not essential. What did John mean when he wrote: "He who does not love his brother abides in death" (1 John 3:14). It is an insult to God to deny His inspired word.

- b. The message Jesus and His apostles taught was one of love. Loving God is the first commandment; loving others is the second (Matt. 22:34-40). A lack of love will cause one to be lost, whatever the universalists teach.
 - c. "The beginning" would refer to the first time they had heard the gospel of love—not to the beginning of time.
 - d. "Love" is a present tense verb—keeping on loving one another.
2. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And why did he slay him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous" (3:12).
- a. The story of Cain and Abel teaches a great many lessons our generations need to learn. One of those lessons is that we must do what God says do in the way He says do it. We must respect the authority of God.
 - b. John says that Cain belonged to that wicked one. We should have no difficulty in deciding who that wicked one is.
 - (A) Cain had a choice to serve God or to reject His instructions. He chose to follow the directions of the evil one—the devil.
 - (B) We know God gave Cain and Abel regulations relating to the worship He demanded (Heb. 11:4). Cf. Rom. 10:17.
 - (C) Why should wicked people envy righteous people? Could it be guilty consciences?
3. "Marvel not, by brethren, if the world hate you" (3:13).
- a. "Marvel" from *thaumazo*, surprised, amazed. "Do not be surprised, my brothers, that the world hates you" (ESV).
 - b. "If the world hate you, you know that it

hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

(A) Recently **The Tennessean** published an article on the popularity of Christ. The Christ who is popular with the world is not the Christ of the Bible. In the words of Paul, the Christ of popular thought is "another Jesus" (2 Cor. 11:4).

(B) Many modern Americans, including prominent theologians, would strongly object to the Jesus who preached one way to heaven (John 14:6). Many moderns think of Jesus as tolerant of just about any doctrine or behavior.

c. Does the world actually hate followers of Jesus Christ? Dr. Sergeant who writes articles for **The Tennessean** calls creationists "hayseeds." The world does not have preachers and churches that compromise the gospel. Why is Billy Graham popular with the world? He preaches a modified gospel—another gospel (2 Cor. 11:4). If he preached the full gospel, he would not be so popular.

d. If Jesus were as popular with his generations as some claim He is today, would the Jews and others have crucified Him? Why did the people in the first century imprison James, Peter, Paul and countless thousands of others?

e. David Limbaugh, **Persecution: How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christianity** (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003).

(A) "In May 1995, Judge Samuel B. Kent, U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, decreed that any student uttering

the word 'Jesus' would be arrested and incarcerated six months." He said, "And make no mistake, the court is going to have a United States Marshall in attendance at the graduation....The prayer must not refer a specific deity by name, whether it be Jesus, Buddha, Mohammad, the Great God Sheba or anyone else" (p. 5). There is not a judge on earth who can find such foolishness in the American Constitution. The judge is guilty of introducing his own prejudice into the law. He ought to be removed from the bench and jailed.

- (B) "A few years ago, Connecticut law enforcement officials threatened to arrest a man for corrupting the morals of a minor if they could prove he passed out religious tracts to a student... \ Vermont kindergartner was forbidden to tell his classmates that God is not dead, because such talk 'was not allowed in school.' School administration officials at a Kentucky public school told a student he was not permitted to pray or even mention God at school" (p. 6).
4. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loves not his brother abides in death" (3:14).
- a. There is always the temptation to take one verse or one passage and make it the basis of our theological beliefs. For example, some think the Golden Rule is the very essence of the gospel (Matt. 7:12). Others take John 13:34-35 as the basis of Christianity.
 - b. While loving our brothers is absolutely essen-

tial to our walk as Christians, there is much more to Christianity.

- (A) "For if you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).
 - (B) "Marvel not that I said unto you, you must be born again" (John 3:7).
 - (C) "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16).
 - (D) "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not do righteousness is not of God, neither he who does not love his brother" (1 John 3:10).
- c. When we have obeyed the gospel and walk in the light—including loving our brothers—we have passed from death to life.
 - d. If we fail to love our brothers and sisters, we abide in death.
5. "Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (3:15).
- a. It is not easy to avoid hating some people. If someone mistreats you or your family members, it is natural for us to hate them and do them harm.
 - b. The person who hates will often kill when opportunity arises. We have to work at not hating those who abuse and misuse us.
 - c. Jesus gives us a wonderful example of not hating His enemies. "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Does that mean Jesus even loved His enemies?
 - d. "You have heard that it has been said, You shall love your neighbor, and hate your

- enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good unto them who hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:43-44). Is any of that easy to do?
- e. The murderer and the hater of others do not have eternal life dwelling in them.
6. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (3:16).
 - a. "Perceive" from the Greek **ginosko**, to know. This is how we know love. The word "God" does not appear in most manuscripts.
 - b. Literally, this is how we know the thing called "love."
 - c. "He laid down his life for us."
 - (A) "Laid down" from **tithemi**, to place, to put, to lay down. It is the same expression Jesus used of His volunteering to lay down His life for us. "I am the good shepherd ...Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again" (John 10:11, 17).
 - (B) He laid down His life "for us." Jesus paid the ransom for our sins (Matt. 20:28).
 - (C) Isaiah 53 predicts Christ's death for our salvation. The apostle Peter quoted these words from Isaiah 53: "Who did not 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 who judges righteously: who his own self bore our sins on the tree, that, we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you are

- healed. For you were as sheep going astray: but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter 2:22-25).
- (D) Philip began his sermon to the Ethiopian eunuch by explaining the meaning of Isaiah 53:7-8.
- d. "We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
- (A) "Ought" from **opheilo**, to owe, to incur a debt, to be obligated. "I am debtor..." (Rom. 1:14).
- (B) Laying down our lives for others does not mean we can atone for their sins. It means we show our love for God's gracious gift of love by loving others enough to lay down our lives for them.
- (C) "He who says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).
5. "But whoso has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need, and shuts his bowels of compassion from him, how does the love of God dwell in him" (3:17)?
- a. "Goods" from **bios**, life, literally "this world's life."
- (A) "Pride of life" (1 John 2:17). A man brags of the things he has in this life.
- (B) John does not condemn owning private property. But he wants us to know that what we have is not for our benefit only.
- (C) This is the word Jesus used of the widow who gave away her living (Mark 12:44). When God blesses us with material possessions, we have an obligation to help others.

- b. "Sees a brother in need."
- (A) How can we keep from noticing the people in need? Does this apply to seeing the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ? Does it apply to the non-Christian also (Gal. 6:10)?
- (B) Could it apply also to seeing a person in need of the gospel?
- c. "And shuts up his bowels of compassion from him."
- (A) There is a change in the tenses of the verbs. "A brother having good, that brother beholding another brother in need, the second brother continuing to have needs." Then we shut up compassion toward him.
- (B) The word "compassion" from **splankna**. The ancient people believed that the seat of our emotions is our lower abdomens. We are more scientific. We say our hearts. We probably mean our physical hearts. It is actually our minds.
- (1) The word **splankna** is translated "tender mercy" (Luke 1:7-8), "inward affection" (2 Cor. 7:15).
- (2) The verb form **splanknizomai** is always translated "moved with compassion." It is used of Jesus only.
- (a) "But when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them. Because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd" (Matt. 9:36).
- (b) "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her (the widow of Nain), and said, 'Weep not'"

(Luke 7:13). The noun is used eleven times and the verb twelve times.

- d. How does the love of God dwell in a person who shows no concern for his fellowmen? How can we love God whom we have not seen if we do not love our fellowmen whom we have seen?
6. "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (3:18).
- a. Does John mean we should not speak words of love to our family members and to our brothers and sisters in Christ?
 - b. "Dear children, let us stop loving with words and lips alone, but let us love with actions and in truth" (Williams).
 - c. Wherever I speak on the husband-wife relationship, I urge husbands and wives to express love regularly to each other. One of the most common complaints wives express about their husband is that they do not tell the wives they love them. That is a serious mistake.
 - d. But telling others we love them when we show no concern for their welfare is hypocritical.
 - e. "Deed" from *ergo* (work, actions). The person who tells his wife he loves her but never does anything for her is not being honest with her. One wife told me that her husband never gave her a present—not even a birthday or Valentine card. Molly normally did not want gifts. She wanted the money.
 - f. "In truth" indicates we should be speaking the truth when we confess our love—either for God or for man.
 - g. When we sing, "I love thy kingdom, Lord,"

but fail to attend services, give as we have been prospered, etc., we are not fooling the Lord. He knows by our actions if we truly love Him.

7. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (3:19).
 - a. The little book of 1 John uses the word "know" more than any other book, except longer books like John.
 - (A) The Greek **ginosko** appears 223 times in the New Testament; twenty times in 1 John alone.
 - (B) **Eide (oida)** appears 663 times in the New Testament; sixteen times in 1 John alone. "We know that whosoever is born of God sins not; but he who is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:18-20).
 - b. How tragic that liberal theologians and others argue that we cannot know anything. John Shelby Spong insists that we cannot be certain, although he is certain that we cannot be certain.
 - c. To be "in the truth" means to be in Jesus Christ who is the truth (John 14:6).
 - d. How great that we can have the assurance of being in Christ and having His divine approval. "Blessed Assurance" is not just a song. It is the joy we have of knowing that

we are living for God and have the promise of life eternal.

8. "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things" (3:20).
 - a. Does man have a built-in guide for behavior?
 - (A) Every person has a conscience, but that does not mean that every person knows what he ought to do on every occasion.
 - (B) "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or excusing one another" (Rom. 2:14-15).
 - (C) Do we know inherently that some acts are wrong, such as, abusing a child, stealing another man's wife, etc.?
 - b. "God is greater than our heart and knows all things."
 - (A) God's judgment of human behavior is always right.
 - (B) He has established the perfect law and knows men ought to obey that law. Any deviation from that law is sinful – always sinful.
9. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence toward God" (3:21).
 - a. The heart or conscience must be properly educated for its judgments to be valid.
 - b. The Indian mother who sacrifices her child to the heathen gods may have a clear conscience, but that does not justify her cruelty.
 - c. Mothers who abort their babies may also have a clear conscience – although I am

- convinced that most of them do not—but abortion is still immoral.
- d. The ultimate standard is not our consciences, but the inspired word of God.
10. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him because we keep his commandments, and do these things are pleasing in his sight" (3:22).
 - a. Is the word "whatsoever" absolute? Are there no limits to what we can ask?
 - (A) Should we say or at least have in our minds, "Thy will be done?" If what we ask is contrary to the will of God, do we have a right to expect it?
 - (B) James lays down principles that should guide our prayer life:
 - (1) We must ask in faith (James 1:5-6).
 - (2) "You ask, and you receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it on your own lusts" (James 4:3). "Amiss" from *kakos*, in an evil manner.
 - (3) Our prayers must be fervent. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). "The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working" (ESV).
 - b. Would God give us something that would be harmful to us? Do we always know exactly what to ask for and how to ask for it?
 - (A) Are the answers to our prayers contingent on our keeping God's commandments?
 - (B) Must we do what is pleasing in His sight to have His approval?
 11. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and

love one another, as he gave us commandment" (3:23).

- a. Those who deny we must keep God's commandments have a hard time explaining this and similar verses. Why does Paul speak of the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26)? Must faith obey to be genuine faith? We must obey; salvation is not by faith alone.
 - b. John's gospel and this epistle stress the absolute necessity of obeying the Lord's commands (John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3).
 - c. There are two commandments in this verse:
 - (A) "That you should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."
 - (B) "Love one another."
 - (C) There is no possibility of our being saved if we do not obey these commands. They are the very foundation of Christianity.
12. "And he who keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us" (3:24).
- a. "And he who keeps his commandments dwells in him." "Whoever practices obedience to His commandments remains in union with Him, and He in union with him; and in this way we know that He remains in union with us, by the Spirit He has given us" (Williams).
 - b. It is difficult for me to understand why anyone would deny the absolute necessity of keeping God's commands.
 - c. Both verbs – "keeps" and "dwells" – are present active indicatives. If we do not keep on keeping His commandments, does He keep on dwelling in us? If He does, the verse makes no sense. God dwells in

us only if we keep on keeping His commandments.

- d. We know God continually dwells in us by the Spirit He has given us. How do we know the Spirit of God dwells in us? Was He not promised to those who obey the gospel (Acts 2:38)?
- e. Chapter 4 has a long discussion of the Spirit's indwelling. However He dwells in us, it is not miraculous. He does not operate separate and apart from His word.
- f. Have you noticed that many different messages the Holy Spirit is supposed to provide for the various religious groups? But the Holy Spirit is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14:33).

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 John 3

- 1 How do we know the great love that God has bestowed on us?
- 2 What does it mean to be a "son of God?"
- 3 When Christ appears, how shall we appear?
- 4 How important is hope?
- 5 What is the meaning of "transgression?"
- 6 Christ came into the world to take away our sin. There is no sin in Him. Does that mean that Christ never sinned?
- 7 How do we explain: "Whosoever abides in him sins not?" Does that mean Christians do not sin?
- 8 Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. What are the devil's works?
- 9 Explain: "Whosoever is born of God does not sin."
- 10 What is the "seed" that remains in Christ?
- 11 How do we distinguish the children of God and the children of the devil?
- 12 Discuss "doing righteousness" (3:7, 10).
- 13 1 John speaks at length about loving our brothers (3:11, etc.). Discuss.
- 14 Discuss the story of Cain and Abel. What is its significance to us?
- 15 Should Christians be surprised if the world hates them?
- 16 How do we know we have passed from life unto death?
- 17 If a man hates his brother, would it be legitimate to call him a "murderer?"
- 18 How can we discern the love of God?
- 19 If a man has this life's goods and does not aid his needy brother, does the love of God abide in him?
- 20 What is the meaning of the word "compassion?"
- 21 Is professing to love sufficient?
- 22 Can we know we are of the truth?
- 23 Postmodernists think that assurance is arrogance. Is that the message of 1 John and other biblical passages.

Chapter 4

The Epistle Of 1 John

CHAPTER 4

A. Discerning the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error (4:1-6).

1. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (4:1).

a. "Beloved" from **agapetos**, used both of Jesus as God's beloved Son and of Christians. Often used as a manner of address, as in this verse. The Greek word appears sixty-two times in the New Testament, five times in 1 John alone, three times in 3 John.

b. "Believe not every spirit."

(A) Many people in our world are simply gullible when it comes to religious matters. If the preacher says it, we swallow it "hook, line and sinker."

(B) We should have the attitude of the people of Berea. "These were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

(C) Complete skepticism is dangerous, but so is total gullibility. The latter in some circumstances may be more dangerous than the former.

c. "Try the spirits whether they are of God."

(A) "Try" from **dokimazo**, to examine with a view of either approving or disapproving.

- (1) Some form of the word appears forty-seven times in the New Testament. Thirty-nine of those are positive uses and eight are negative.
 - (a) "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). "Tried with fire" (1 Peter 17).
 - (b) The word is translated "reprobate" (Rom 1:28), "castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27) and "rejected" (Heb. 6:8).
 - (2) By what standard do we try the spirits, that is, those who are teaching error? In other words, what is our source of authority in religion?
 - (3) If the teaching cannot be found in God's word, it did not come from God. We must reject the teaching as being false.
- (B) We cannot furnish justification for not knowing the truth and not following it. Will the excuse, "I did not know," be acceptable in the day of judgment?
- d. "Many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- (A) Watching TBN will convince any serious Bible student of the truthfulness of John's inspired statement.
- (1) Calvinism
 - (2) Dispensationalism
 - (3) The prosperity gospel
 - (4) Pentecostalism
 - (5) Roman Catholicism
 - (6) Endorsement of women preachers
- (B) Opposing false teachers, whether in our own brotherhood or elsewhere, irritates many religious people. Some of our own preachers object to condemning any

practice, regardless of how ridiculous the practice is.

2. "Hereby you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God" (4:2).
 - a. One of the great blunders of biblical interpreters is to take one verse or a few verses and build their interpretive framework on that verse or on those verses. Example: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).
 - (A) Is that all one has to do to be Christ's disciples, "To love our brothers and sisters?"
 - (B) Do we not have to believe that Jesus is the Christ, repent of our sins, confess Christ before men and be baptized for the remission of sins?
 - (C) It is being dishonest with the scriptures to build our theological worldview on one verse or on one doctrine.
 - b. We know the Spirit of God only as we know His revelation in the Bible. No man knows the mind of the Holy Spirit except as the Holy Spirit reveals His mind (1 Cor. 2:5-13)
 - c. Confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is the foundation of our responsibility to God. But there are many other precepts we must teach, believe and obey to be pleasing to God.
 - (A) Although the Bible does not use the word "incarnation," that is the truth John is teaching.
 - (B) "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the

glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

(C) "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

(D) Some of the Gnostics believed that Jesus was God but rejected his incarnation. Many liberal theologians of our day also reject the incarnation. Nobody has the right to call himself a Christian if he denies that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

3. "And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God: and this is the spirit of anti-Christ, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is in the world" (4:3).

a. It is not enough to accept the good moral teaching of Jesus and of His apostles.

b. Those teachers who failed to confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh were false teachers. They did and do enormous damage to the cause of Christ.

c. No one can deny that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and legitimately claim to belong to God. How can we deny God's Son and claim to love God?

d. Those who fail to confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh are of the spirit of the anti-Christ.

(A) The word "anti-Christ" means against Christ. Our dispensational friends look for one big Anti-Christ—a major figure who will control the world before Christ returns.

- (B) The disciples had heard that an anti-Christ was coming. We are not told how they had heard it.
 - (C) The spirit of the anti-Christ was already in the world. There are many who belong in that category in our day. John Shelby Spong denies the virgin birth of Christ, His miracles, His resurrection from the dead, His second coming. Spong also denies that God is a personal being. He is somewhat like Aristotle's "unmoved mover."
4. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he who is in you, than he who is in the world" (4:4).
- a. Who are the children of God?
 - (A) Every person in the universe is God's creature. He is responsible for our being here. The Bible pictures God as the Creator of the entire world, including man.
 - (B) But just because we are God's creatures does not mean we are His children. The Bible uses two figures to show our relationship to God—birth and adoption.
 - (1) Jesus taught Nicodemus about the new birth (John 3:1-13).
 - (2) Paul uses the figure of adoption (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4). "To redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5). "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:5). The word "adoption" means to put in the place of a son.

- b. "Little children" is one of John's favorite expressions in this book (1 John 2:1, 18, 28). It is not a term of condescension, but one of endearment. At the time John wrote this letter he was an old man. He thought of those he had taught as his own children.
 - c. "Overcome" from **nikao** means to win the victory. The New Testament uses some form of the word twenty-eight times—one time in John, six times in 1 John and seventeen times in Revelation.
 - d. The "them" whom these Christians had overcome were the false teachers—the ones who were denying the humanity of Christ.
 - e. The reason the Christians then had overcome the false teachers and the reason we can do it is because "greater is he who is in you, than he who is in the world."
 - (A) God, Christ and the Holy Spirit dwells by faith in the children of God. In this context, is he speaking of the Holy Spirit? He did say in verse 2: "Hereby you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."
 - (B) How absolutely impossible it would be for us to overcome the world without God's help. His word is our guide. We can ask for His help. We know that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much (James 5:16). If we are on God's side, we cannot lose. If we are not on His side, we cannot win.
5. "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them" (4:5).
- a. The false teachers and their followers are of the world. In some cases they claim to belong

to God, but they are deceiving themselves. We know that all who claim to belong to God cannot belong to Him. If the all belonged to Him, that would make God an endorser of confusion. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33).

- b. Because the false teachers are of the world, they speak as those who are in the world. Our thoughts, speech and actions betray us.
 - c. The world pays attention to its own. The world listens to the false teachers because they agree with them.
 - d. Ann Coulter has a new book with the title, **How To Talk to a Liberal (if you must)** (New York: Crown Forum, 2004). Ann has liberal politicians in mind, but the principle applies beyond politics. How can you talk with people about the Bible when they know little or nothing about the Bible? There has to be some common ground before we can understand each other. Let us say, for example, that you mention the prodigal son or the good Samaritan. Does the average man on the street or even some educated people know what you have in mind?
6. "We are of God; he who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. Hereby we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (4:6).
- a. How can we know we are of God? Are all people of God who think they are or say they are? When we know God's Son and are obedient to His Son, we are of God.
 - b. We cannot ignore the many times the word "know" appears in 1 John. John uses the word **ginosko** in 1 John twenty-three times

- and **oida** 14 times. How utterly foolish for anyone to argue that we cannot know.
- c. Those who know God in apostolic times listened to the God-sent messengers, such as John, Paul and Peter. Those who know God today listen to faithful preachers of the gospel. We have a standard by which we can judge whether one is preaching the truth. We must have the attitude of the Bereans (Acts 17:11).
 - d. If we are not of God, we do not want to hear the truth of the gospel. There are elderships in our brotherhood who will not allow preachers to speak on marriage, divorce and remarriage or on church discipline. One eldership would not allow their preacher to discuss beverage alcohol. When we do not listen to the proclamation of the gospel, we are not of God – whatever our pretensions.
 - e. In our day we can discern between truth and error by studying and applying the word of God. There is no other way. God does not whisper in our ears, as some Quaker writers have argued. Nor do we have special revelations from the Holy Spirit. The Bible furnishes us in all good works (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). Without our Bibles, how can we know which message is from God?
- B. Brotherly love God's requirement for all Christians (4:7-21).
- 1. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God" (4:7).
 - a. Christianity is a religion of love—not of hate. Islam is a religion of hate—not just for Christians and Jews—but for other Muslims

who disagree with them. Muslim have executed hundreds of thousands of their own people. Irshad Manji, a Canadian Muslim and lesbian, had written a very revealing book, **The Trouble with Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003). Her book is actually a letter to other Muslims. She says she heard from a Saudi friend "that his country's religious police arrest women for wearing red on Valentine's day, and I think: Since when does a merciful God outlaw joy—or fun? I read about victims of rape being stoned for 'adultery,' and I wonder how a critical mass of us can stay stone silent" (p. 1). "Pick a Muslim country, any Muslim country, and the most brutal humiliations will grab you by the vitals. In Pakistan, an average of two women every day die from 'honor killings,' often with Allah's name on the lips of the murderers" (p. 29). Is that love? The vast majority of those being killed by the Muslims are also Muslims. While about twelve hundred American servicemen have been killed, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed by their own people.

- b. "Let us love one another." The Bible does not define the word "love," but it gives us insight into how love behaves. 1 Corinthians 13 is the greatest treatise on love in any language. Even secular humanists think the reading of this great chapter would be appropriate at the funeral of other humanists.
- c. We learn about loving one another from God. "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The word "him" does not

- appear in the original text. Most modern versions omit the word "him."
- d. "For love is of God." Does that mean that people who do not believe in God cannot experience or give love? It means that God is the source of love. If God did not exist, there would be no solid basis for love. In too many cases, men and women show emotional love—not intellectual love. In the words of Dr. Frank Minerth and Dr. Paul Maier, "Love is a choice." One of Dr. James Dobson's books has the title, **Can We Trust Our Emotions?**
- e. "Everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God."
- (A) One of man's greatest temptations in thinking on religious themes is to build their spiritual houses on one or on a few biblical texts. I talked briefly with a man this week who said, "The denomination of which people are members has nothing to do with their spiritual well-being. Jesus said that we would know his disciples by the fact that they love one another." What if they are atheists, agnostics or secular humanists? Muslims and Buddhists love one another. Does that mean they are well-pleasing to the Lord?
- (B) We must remember that 1 John was addressed to Christians—not to people of this world. Loving God and loving our fellowmen are essential ingredients of a faithful Christian life. Can we really love God without obeying His commandments (John 14:15)? cf. 1 John 5:2-3.

- (C) We are born of God when we believe the gospel and obey it from the heart (Rom. 6:17-18). Evidence of the new birth can be observed in our conduct.
2. "He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (4:8).
 - a. John is not arguing that those who do not love must deny the existence of God. Thomas Jefferson was a religious liberal who denied the miracles of the Bible, but he did not deny the existence of God. Tom Paine—an real enemy of Christianity—believed in God and in a final judgment.
 - b. We may know God's existence even if we do not love either God or man, but we do not really know God. Knowing about God and knowing God are two different ideas. Millions of people would confess faith in God's existence, but they have not obeyed Him.
 - c. "God is love."
 - (A) Not only does God love; He is love.
 - (B) In His very nature, He is love.
 - (C) "And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16).
 3. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might love through him" (4:9).
 - a. How do we know God loves us?
 - (A) His provisions for our lives on earth is one evidence that He loves us. But there are tornadoes, diseases and other troubles to which we are heir.

- (B) The greatest evidence of God's love for us is the fact that God sent His Son to die for us.
 - (C) The word "manifested" (**phaneroo**) means to make visible, to make clear. The true meaning is to uncover, to lay bare, to reveal. Sometimes the word is translated "appear" in reference to our Lord's second coming.
- b. This verse is very similar to John 3:16. God sent His only Son into the world that we might live. Does that not mean that Christ is our only Savior? Has God sent anyone else to die for our sins?
4. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (4:10).
 - a. John is not denying the necessity of our loving God and one another, but that is not the essence of love.
 - b. The real meaning of love is that God loved us and sent Christ to die for us.
 - c. The word "propitiation" appears three times only in the New Testament—two times here in 1 John. The word refers to the means whereby sin is covered and remitted. The word means merciful, expiation. The word refers to the sacrifice Christ made for our sins. "Mercy-seat" is not a bad translation of the Greek.
 - d. "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).
 - e. Paul mentions our redemption through Jesus Christ, "whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to

- declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:24-25). A similar Greek word (**hilaskomai**) appears in two New Testament passages where it is translated "merciful" (Luke 18:13) and "reconciliation" (Heb. 2:17).
- f. God sent His Son into the world to save all men, not just the elect. He wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). He does not want any to perish. He wants them to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The doctrine of "limited atonement" is an abominable position.
5. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (4:11).
 - a. The word "if" does not suggest any doubt about God's love for us. It is a condition of the first class and assumed to be true. "Since" might be a better translation than "if."
 - b. Since God has loved us to the extent of sending His Son to die for us – all of us – how can we fail to love one another? How can I not love whom God loves?
 - c. Pagan people in apostolic times were amazed at the great love Christians had one for another. Do we show to the world that same love?
 - d. The word "ought" (**opheilomen**) suggests duty, obligation. We have a sacred duty to love one another.
 - e. What does it mean to love one another?
 - (A) While verbal expressions of love are important, they are not adequate.
 - (B) We must seek the welfare of others. "Love is kind...seeks not her own...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all

things, endures all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-5, 7).

6. "No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us" (4:12).
 - a. "No man has seen God at any time."
 - (A) If men were to see God, they could not survive the experience. His magnificence would overwhelm them.
 - (B) "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him" (John 1:18).
 - (C) Paul affirms that Christ "is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15).
 - (D) "Which (Christ) in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting" (1 Tim. 6:15-16).
 - (E) "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither does man know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27).
 - b. "If we love one another, God dwells in us."
 - (A) "If we keep on loving one another."
 - (B) We could love one another and never obey the gospel. If we take passages like this out of context, we might conclude that believing the gospel and obeying are unnecessary. We must remember that

John is writing to Christians, not to alien sinners.

- (C) If we keep on loving one another, God keeps on abiding in us.
- c. "And his love is perfected in us."
- (A) John certainly does not mean that any human being can do anything perfectly, that is, without any flaws.
- (B) "Completed" is the meaning of the word "perfected." "His love is made complete in us" (McCord).
7. "Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit" (4:13).
- a. The word "dwell" is one of the key words in 1 John. **Meno** means to dwell or to remain. It appears eight times in 1 John. If we must remain in Christ, we are not saved by grace alone.
- b. Is the gift of the Spirit miraculous or does He abide in us through His word?
- c. "But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9).
8. "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (4:14).
- a. The apostles had known Christ, they had witnessed His great miracles, they had seen Him after He was raised from the dead. They knew He was what He claimed to be because the miracles had confirmed that truth.
- b. The word "testify" means to bear witness.
- c. One of the strong emphasis in the gospel for John is that God sent Jesus into the world.

- d. Jesus came for a number of purposes, but the major one was to be the Savior of the world. Without Christ, the world would be lost. He is our only Savior.
 - e. We cannot overemphasize that Christ is our only Savior. Pluralism is the major philosophy in religious circles.
9. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he is God" (4:15).
- a. The crucial question: What does it mean to confess that Jesus is the Son of God?
 - (A) Does it mean only saying, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God?" "Not every one who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of God, but he who does the will of the Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). "Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not what I say unto you" (Luke 6:46)?
 - (B) Many denominational preachers recommend the so-called sinner's prayer based on Romans 10:9-10. Confessing belief in Christ demands obedience.
 - (C) Paul speaks of "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5; 16:26). Faith that does not obey is dead faith (James 2:17, 24).
 - (D) If we truly confess faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that is, confess with a view to obeying the Lord, God dwells in us and we dwell in him.
 - (E) "Dwell" or "abide" is one of the key words in the gospel of John and in 1 John.
 - (1) The word appears forty times in John. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the

branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me" (John 15:4).

(2) It is used twenty-three times in 1 John. "He who says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

(3) If we must dwell in Christ or abide in Him, we are saved by grace alone.

b. How can we say we are honestly confessing faith in Christ if we fail to abide in His commandments? Failing to live by our confession is hypocrisy.

10. "And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him" (4:16).

a. Biblical interpreters are often tempted to take one verse or a few verses and seek to construct Christianity around that verse or those verses.

(A) If we knew only verse 15, we might be tempted to argue that confession of faith in Christ makes one a Christian. Such an approach ignores dozens or even hundreds of passages, including many in 1 John.

(B) Believing and knowing God means more than believing and knowing His existence. It means knowing His word and living by that word.

(C) It is meaningful that the words "know" and "believe" are both used of God. Some people argue that knowing excludes believing.

- (D) The word "know" means more than having an intellectual comprehension of God's existence. It means knowing Him as our God. It means having a relationship with Him.
 - (E) We have known and believed the love God has for us because we have seen manifestations of that love. God's love is evident in the arrangements He has made for our physical lives as well as the arrangements He has made for our spiritual welfare.
 - b. "God is love." He not only loves us; He is love. That is His very nature. Cf. 1 John 4:8.
 - c. "He who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him."
 - (A) If we do not dwell in love, do we still dwell in God?
 - (B) Does God dwell in us if we are not dwelling in love?
11. "Herein is love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (4:17).
- a. If we dwell in love we dwell in God and God dwells in us. "Herein" is love made perfect.
 - b. The word "perfect" never means flawless or sinless. Our love is mature or complete when we dwell in love.
 - c. When we stand before God in judgment, we can have boldness. "Boldness" means confidence.
 - (A) "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).

- (B) The word does not mean pride or arrogance.
- d. "Because as he is, so are we in this world." Our duty in this world is to live for Christ and to live as he lived. We are not little saviors, but we are to point men to the Savior.
12. "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear: because fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love" (4:18).
- a. The word "fear" (**phobos**) may mean either cringing fear or fear in the sense of respect or reverence. In this context it means being afraid.
- b. Should we use fear as a means of pointing men and women to Christ? Christ and the apostles did. If that were not true, why would they speak of hell, eternal punishment, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone?
- c. "Perfect love casts our fear." But who has perfect love? As we mature in the Christian faith, love drives fear away.
- d. "Fear has torment."
- (A) What we fear often torments us to the point we cannot rest or sleep.
- (B) If you have ever had a review by the internal revenue, you know what I mean.
- (C) If you have ever stood by the bedside of a dying loved one, you know what I mean.
- (D) The word "torment" means punishment. It is translated eternal "punishment" (Matt. 25:46).
- e. "He who fears is not made perfect in love."
- (A) Very few of us have reached that stage where we no longer fear.

- (B) It takes greater faith than most of us have. But it is the goal toward which Christians should strive.
13. "We love him, because he first loved us" (4:19).
- There are questions about whether the word "him" was in the original text.
 - McCord, NRSV, NASB, ESV and other versions render the Greek: "We love because he first loved us."
 - God is the source of love. Without God, we would not know what love means and how we are to love one another.
14. "If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen" (4:20)?
- John is not discouraging our loving God, but loving God means more than just saying we love God. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). Loving God also means loving one another. How can we fail to love those who are made in the image of God?
 - Hating a brother is a very serious offense against God.
 - Racism
 - Anti-semitism
 - Class discrimination
 - Age discrimination
 - John often uses the word "liar" in this epistle (5 times). If we claim to love God but hate our brother, we are liars.
 - Do you wonder how the Iraqis can kill their own people? Do they hate their own people?
-

- e. If we do not love our brother whom we have seen, how can we claim to love God whom we have not seen?
15. "And this commandment we have from him, That he who loves God love his brother also" (4:21).
- a. It is not simply expedient that we love one another; it is God's command.
 - b. How can anyone love God and not love his brother for whom Jesus died?

Living For Jesus: Questions For 1 John 4

- 1 Is it scriptural to examine the views of all teachers to determine if they are preaching the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
- 2 How do we know the Spirit of God?
- 3 Some of the early false teachers denied that Jesus was actually flesh and blood. What does John teach on that topic?
- 4 What is the spirit of antichrist?
- 5 What does John mean by the expression, "Greater is he who is in you than he that is in the world?"
- 6 How do Christians recognize false teachers?
- 7 How do we recognize true teachers?
- 8 According to John, what is the very nature of God (4:8, 16)?
- 9 Explain: "God send his Son to be a propitiation for our sins."
- 10 Since God has loved us, how should we respond to our fellowmen?
- 11 "No man has seen God at any time." So how do we know He exists?
- 12 John demands that we confess our faith in Christ and abide in Him. Discuss this concept.
- 13 How can we have boldness in the day of judgment? What does that mean?
- 14 "We love because he first loved us." Explain.
- 15 Can the love of God dwell in a person who hates his brother?
- 16 Is it ever Christian to call a person a liar?

Chapter 5

The Epistle Of 1 John

CHAPTER 5

A. Emphasis on faith and love (5:1-12).

1. "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone who loves him that begat loves him also who is begotten of him" (5:1).
 - a. Hebrews 6:1 lists "faith toward God" as one of the first principles of the oracles of God.
 - (A) We should know how important faith is in the scheme of human redemption. "Without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6).
 - (B) What does genuine faith demand?
 - (1) It requires works to be meaningful. "Faith without works is dead" (James 1:17, 24).
 - (2) One writer has said that works do not save, but we cannot be saved without them. How could a statement be more illogical?
 - (3) What kind of faith justifies? The book of Romans stresses justification by faith. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:10). Must we work good to receive eternal life? If not, what is the meaning of this verse?
 - b. Believing in Jesus Christ means doing exactly what He tells us to do. "If you know these

- things, happy are you if you do them" (John 13:17). Why did not Jesus say, "Happy are you if you believe them?"
- c. If we believe in Jesus Christ, we are born of God. But what does it mean to believe in Him?
 - d. If we love God who has begotten us, we will also love all who are begotten of Him.
 - e. If we truly love God, we also love His children. Loving another means seeking his welfare.
2. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments" (5:2).
 - a. We can know that we love the children of God.
 - b. How do we know we love God? By keeping His commandments.
 - (A) The word "keep" comes from the verb **tereo**.
 - (B) Some versions use the word **poieo**, do. Williams renders the verb "obey." So does the English Standard Version.
 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (5:3).
 - a. John cannot be speaking of God's love for us. "The love of God" is used in an objective sense. It is "not mere declamatory boasting (1 John 4:20), but obedience to God's commands, 'that we keep on keeping his commandments'" (1 John 2:3) (Robertson, Vol. 6, p. 238).
 - b. Some Calvinists argue that a requirement to keep God's commands means we are not saved by grace alone. That is true and shows conclusively that we are not saved by grace alone.

- c. From the beginning to the end of the Bible, there is great stress on keeping God's commandments. Would the faith of Abel, of Enoch, of Noah and of Abraham have saved them if they had not kept God's commandments? "By faith Abraham...obeyed" (Heb. 11:8).
- d. "His commandments are not grievous."
(A) "Grievous" comes from **barus** and literally means a weight. The word means burdensome, heavy, weighty. "For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers....Woe unto you Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, anis and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:4, 23).
(B) God's commandments are not burdensome. They are intended for our benefit. For example, think of the hardships human beings could avoid if they kept all of God's commandments. God's command not to engage in sexual promiscuity could help people avoid AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and other consequences.
(C) Satan would like to convince all people that keeping God's commands is a great burden. God's commands provide freedom for those who keep them.
- e. One of the major differences between Calvinists and non-Calvinists relates to the necessity of keeping God's commandments. We do not believe we can

earn salvation by keeping God's commandments, but we believe we must keep them to be saved.

4. "For whosoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith" (5:4).
 - a. How is one born of God?
 - b. The one who is born of God overcomes the world.
 - (A) "Overcomes" from **nikao**, to win the victory.
 - (B) The verb **nikao** appears twenty-eight times in the New Testament; sixteen times in Revelation alone. The word can also be translated "conquer" and "has prevailed." "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof" (Rev. 5:5). "And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he who sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). The word is also rendered "gotten the victory" (Rev. 15:2). In the King James Version the word is almost always translated "overcome."
 - (C) We can be sure of winning the victory if we obey God's commandments. "Nay, in all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). "We overwhelmingly conquer" (NASB). "We keep on gloriously conquering" (Williams). "We are gaining surpassing victory through the one who loved us" (A. T. Robertson, Vol. 4, p. 379).

- c. "And this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith."
- (A) "Victory" from **nike**. The famous Nike shoes are named for this Greek word. The manufacturers chose a name that means victory.
- (B) The victory that overcomes (gains victory) over the world is our faith.
- (1) John cannot be speaking of faith alone. Faith alone is dead (James 2:17, 24). Faith alone does nothing because it is alone.
- (2) If our faith does not motivate us to obey the Lord's commandments, it is not saving faith.
5. "Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (5:5)?
- a. There is no way for one to overcome the evil in our world without believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
- b. Belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God means a continual commitment to His way of life.
6. "This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water alone, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (5:6).
- a. There is no problem identifying the "one who came." John is speaking of the fact that Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).
- b. The expression, "by water and blood," is more difficult to interpret.
- c. "It seems clear, therefore, that the reference to the water is an allusion to His baptism; and that of blood to His death. He came

- with water at His baptism (Matt. 3:15); with blood in his death on the cross (John 19:34)" (Woods, p. 313).
- d. "These two incidents in the Incarnation are singled out because at His baptism Jesus was formally set apart to his Messianic work by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Him and by the Father's audible witness, and because at the Cross His work reached its culmination. There are other theories that do not accord with the language and the facts" (volume 6, p. 239).
 - e. His coming was not with (*dia*: by means of) water only, but with water and the blood.
 - f. "And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth."
 - (A) Christ sent the Spirit to bear witness of the mighty works of God (John 14:6; 15:26; 16:7-13). The Spirit searched the mind of God and revealed his mind to man (1 Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:3-6).
 - (B) We can trust the witness of the Spirit because the Spirit is the truth.
 - (C) The last part of verse 6 in the King James Version is verse 7 in most modern versions.
7. "For there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one" (5:7).
- a. It is almost universally agreed that these words did not appear in the original text. Roy Lanier, Jr. provides the following summary of scholarly judgments on the passage:
 - (A) "The passage is not found in a single, genuine, unaltered critical manuscript prior to the 16th century.

- (B) "The passage is not in any ancient version save the Latin.
 - (C) "The passage is not in the earliest and best critical editions of the Greek New Testament.
 - (D) "Not all manuscripts of the Latin versions contain the clause.
 - (E) "It is not quoted by the Greek fathers, or early ecclesiastical writers.
 - (F) "It is not quoted by the Latin fathers.
 - (G) "The Protestant Reformers rejected it or marked it as doubtful" (p. 185).
- b. What would be the purpose of anyone's bearing witness in heaven? There is nothing in the context that demands this sentence. It is very doubtful that it appeared in the original text.
8. "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (5:8).
 - a. The purpose of the three bearing witness is to authenticate the mission and work of Jesus Christ.
 - b. We know of the witness of the Spirit. He came to teach about what Jesus had said and done. He would reveal further information about Christ. He would also bring his work to the remembrance to the apostles.
 - c. The blood Jesus shed on the cross bears witness to His love for fallen men.
 - d. The water would be the baptism He experienced at the hands of John the Baptist.
 - e. The Greek verb "bear witness" (*marturountes*) is a present participle and indicates that it will always bear witness.
 - f. The three agree in one. "They cooperate to

establish the truth about Jesus. The verdict is unanimous" (Lanier, p. 187).

9. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son" (5:9).
 - a. For our legal system to function, we must receive the witness of men. That does not mean we accept the testimony without considering the consistency of the testimony, the kind of people who testify, their motives for testifying, etc.
 - b. But in the normal course of life, we accept the witness of men. Life would be almost impossible without it.
 - c. If we receive the witness of men, surely we will accept the witness of God. God cannot lie; human witnesses can and do.
 - (A) God testified: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5).
 - (B) John 5 lists a number of witnesses to Christ's deity. "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works that the Father has given me to finish, the same works I do, bear witness of me, that the Father has sent me. And the Father himself, who has sent me, has borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And you have not his word abiding in you: for whom he has sent, him you believe not" (John 5:36-38).
 - (C) "It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness of me" (John 8:17-18).

- (D) In one sense, the whole Bible testifies to who Jesus is.
10. "He who believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he who does not believe God has made him a liar; because he does not believe the record God gave of his Son" (5:10).
 - a. That is a very powerful statement. It should shake the unbelievers to the very core of their being.
 - b. If we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we have accepted the testimony of God and have the witness in our own hearts and lives.
 - c. Failing to believe the testimony God has given concerning Jesus means we have made God a liar. How absolutely unthinkable that lowly human beings should make God a liar!
 - d. God's testimony concerning Jesus is overwhelming. How can anyone reject the great miracles and the masterful teachings of Jesus?
 11. "And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in the Son" (5:11).
 - a. God has given us eternal life. Was the gift contingent on anything man has done?
 - (A) One theologian said: "He has come down to us — all the way down — and has not left one step for us to climb."
 - (B) Nothing we do, according to Calvinism, contributes one whit to our salvation. Rubel Shelley agrees with the Calvinists on this point.
 - b. Robert Shank, **Elect in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Election** (Springfield, MO: Westcott Publishers, 1970); **Life in the Son:**
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A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance
(Springfield, MO: Westcott Publishers, 1960).
These books are among the finest ever
written.

- c. The life is in the Son and only in the Son.
12. "He who has the Son has life; and he who has not the Son of God has not life" (5:12).
 - a. If this is not the exclusiveness of Christianity, I would not know how to describe it.
 - b. If we do not believe in Jesus Christ and obey His gospel, we are lost for eternity.
 - c. There is no way to harmonize this teaching with the teaching of John Calvin.
 - d. We have to believe and obey. God does not believe and obey for us.
 - e. If the Calvinists were right, we would not know whether if we have life. If men have no part in our salvation, we could not know if God has saved us.
 - f. The crucial question: What do we have to do to get life?
 - g. When we have life, is there anyway we can lose it? There is an old saying in Middle Tennessee: If you seek it, you cannot find it; if you find it, you cannot lose it; if you lose it, you never had it in the first place.
- B. Conclusion (5:13-21). Roy Lanier, Jr. has given the following outline (pp. 194-215).
 1. Boldness in the assurance of eternal life (5:13-15).
 - a. "These things I have written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God" (5:13).

(A) We have noticed before John's emphasis on writing. "These things have I written unto you."

- (B) His letter is addressed to those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - (1) Christians must walk in the light (1:7).
 - (2) We must do righteousness (1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10).
 - (3) Those born of God do not practice sin (3:9).
 - (4) Christians must help the needy (3:17; 4:20).
- (C) If we truly believe on the name of the Son of God, we know we have eternal life. The word "know" means we can know for sure.
- (D) The radical Calvinists argue that faith comes after salvation. Salvation is wholly of God. Our faith is a fruit of salvation and does not contribute to our salvation.
- (E) The word "believe" is one of the key words in John's writings, especially in the gospel of John.
- b. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, iff we ask anything according to his will, he hears us" (5:14).
 - (A) "Confidence" from **parresian** (boldness). John used the word in two other passages.
 - (1) "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2:28).
 - (2) "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:21).
 - (B) Are there no limits to what we can ask

of God? If I ask for a new airplane, will He give it to me?

(C) Our asking must be according to His will. I heard one preacher on TBN say that we ought not to use that kind of language. It shows a weakness and lack of faith on our part. Jesus prayed, "If it be thy will." So did the apostle Paul. Can we not imitate Christ and Paul?

(D) James lays down three principles for praying:

(1) "Ask in faith, nothing wavering" (James 1:6).

(2) We must not ask amiss, that is, with the intention of using it for selfish purposes (James 4:3).

(3) We must be righteous in God's sight (James 5:16). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

b. "And if we know he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him" (5:15).

(A) The word "know" (*ginosko*) appears twenty-two times in 1 John. *Oida* appears 14 times. John did not entertain the view that human beings cannot know truth.

(B) We know God hears our prayers if we offer them in accord with His will.

(C) God would never give us something that would be detrimental to us. Someone has wisely observed: "Thank God for unanswered prayers."

(D) The word "desired" means asked. We have the petitions we asked of Him.

2. Boldness in prayer (5:16-17).

a. "If any man see his brother sin a sin that is

not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death" (5:16a).

- (A) This epistle is addressed to Christians. "Brother" is a brother in Christ, not one's physical brother, unless he is also a brother in Christ.
- (B) "A sin that is not unto death." The verb is a present participle that means continuing sin. Does the term refer to a sin that does not lead to death?
- (C) We must ask for the man who is sinning, regardless of the sin.
- (D) "There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (5:16b).
 - (1) Is this a sin that leads to death?
 - (2) "It is obvious that no single sin, contemplated as an overt act was in the apostle's mind. Correctly rendered, the passage does not designate **the** sin, or even **a** sin, but mere sin, sin in essence, sin abstractly considered. (b) The sin was such that a brother could discern it, i.e., identify it: 'If any man **see**...' (c) The death referred to was not bodily death, the loss of physical life; but spiritual death, separation from God and all that is good. (d) It was such a sin as only children of God could be guilty of. Any interpretation that is correct must take into account of each of these considerations and embrace them. (1) The sin contemplated here is not such as usually classified as capital i.e., such sins as idolatry, murder, adultery, blasphemy, etc. (2)

The effects of it were visible and obvious—such as can be seen. (3) It was possible for one who prays to distinguish between the sin unto death and a sin not unto death. To what type of sin did John refer (Woods, p. 321). Brother Woods seems to think that the sin under consideration is the sin of which a brother will not repent and confess (pp. 321-322).

- b. "All unrighteousness is in: and there is a sin not unto death" (5:17).
 - (A) "Unrighteousness" is obviously the opposite of righteousness. Righteousness is doing the will of God (1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10).
 - (B) The unrighteous are not going to heaven (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
 - (C) If one must do righteousness, he cannot be saved by grace alone through faith alone.
 - (D) Righteousness must be defined by doing the will of God (Psa. 119:172).
 - (E) The sin not unto death would be a sin for which one can and should repent. We are to pray for such a brother.
- 3. Boldness in the things Christians know (5:18-21).
 - a. "We know that whatsoever is born of God does not sin; but he that is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one does not touch him" (5:18).
 - (A) "We know" (**oidamen**), we have come to know and still know. We have sure or complete knowledge because of revelation of God's will.

- (B) "Born of God" means those who have become Christians. "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9).
 - (C) "Does not sin" does not mean he is incapable of sin. "Does not keep on sinning" (ESV). Does not continue to practice sin (McCord).
 - (D) The one who is begotten of God "keeps himself." Some interpret the "one who is begotten of God" as Christ. Does that mean Jesus Christ keeps us? Other interpret the term to refer to Christians. The ESV, McCord and others seem to think John was speaking of Christians.
 - (E) When we live according to God's law, the evil one cannot touch us. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he who is in you, that he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).
 - (F) Satan is the great deceiver, but he cannot lead God's people astray – if they continue to walk in the light (1 John 1:7).
- b. "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness" (5:19).
- (A) "We know" (**oidamen**). We have complete assurance.
 - (B) We know we belong to God because we have responded in faith and obedience to His revealed will. There is no other way to know.
 - (C) We know the world lies in wickedness (**poneros**). The people of the world generally speaking are devoted to evil.

"This is a terrible picture of the Graeco-Roman world of the first century A. D., which is confirmed by Paul in Romans 1 and 2 and by Horace, Seneca, Juvenal and Tacitus: (Robertson, volume 6, p. 245).

- c. "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (5:20).
- (A) In the last three verses – 18, 19, 20 – John has used the word **oidamen** – we have come to know and still know. The word is used sixteen times in 1 John 5 alone. It is not accidental that the word appears so often. It is used dozens of times in the gospel of John.
- (B) "We know that the Son of God has come."
(1) The evidence for that truth is powerful and irrefutable.
(2) The miracles He performed proved Him to be the One He claimed to be – the Son of God.
- (C) He "has given us understanding." An understanding about what?
(1) The true God (John 1:18).
(2) The plan of salvation (Heb. 2:1-4).
(3) The existence of heaven (John 14:1-6).
(4) The good works we must do (John 13:12-17).
- (D) "That we may know him who is true."
(1) The word "know" (**ginosko**) is different from the word in the first

- part of the verse. The word refers to Christians' coming to know Christ and having a relationship with Him.
- (2) The One who is true is Jesus Christ.
- (E) "We are in him who is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ."
- (1) "In Christ" is one of the key expressions in Paul's writings, especially in Ephesians. All spiritual blessings are in Christ—election, forgiveness, adoption, reconciliation, redemption, etc.
- (2) If we are not in the Son, we do have life (1 John 2:12).
- (F) "This is the true God, and eternal life."
- (1) Is he speaking of God the Father or of God the Son?
- (2) It seems to me that John is referring to the Son. Throughout John and 1 John, we are informed that life is in the Son.
- (3) Being in the Son also means life is in the Father.
- d. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (5:21).
- (A) John uses the expression, "little children," over and over. It is not a term of condescension, but of endearment.
- (B) "Keep" from **phulasso** and requires efforts on their part. We cannot keep ourselves from idols on our own. We must have the Lord's help, but He does not keep us without our cooperation.
- (C) "Amen." So be it.

Living For Jesus: Questions On 1 John 5

- 1 How do we know we are born of God?
- 2 Does being born again mean we must love all others who are born again?
- 3 How do we know we know we are children of God?
- 4 If we love God, we must keep His commandments. Are His commandments grievous or burdensome?
- 5 What does overcoming the world mean? How do we overcome the world? Is it by faith alone?
- 6 What does John mean "by water" and "by blood?" Whom does he have in mind?
- 7 "He who has the Son has life." Discuss.
- 8 Can we "know" that we have eternal life?
- 9 What is the "sin unto death?"
- 10 What is "unrighteousness?"
- 11 John constantly uses the word "know." Is he arguing that we can actually KNOW or does he mean we can just have an opinion?
- 12 John commands his readers: "Keep yourselves from idols." Was that a major danger in apostolic times? Is it a danger today?

2 John

The Epistle Of 2 John

I. Introduction:

A. Authorship.

1. Nowhere – either in 2 John or in 3 John – does the author give us any definitive clues as to his identity.
 - a. The word (**presbuteros**) can mean either an older man or an elder of the church. It can suggest seniority of the author.
 - b. From contemporary sources, it is not easy to establish the Johannine authorship of the epistle. The consensus of conservative scholarship seems to be that the apostle John wrote the epistle.

B. Destination of the letter.

1. “Unto the elect lady.”
 - a. Some writers take the Greek word **eklekte** as a proper name.
 - b. Some scholars seem to think that the word refers to the church.
 - c. Was she a faithful Christian woman the apostle knew?
 - d. Is the “elect lady” the church somewhere? We do not know and probably cannot know. The information is too scarce.
2. Lacking information about the destination of the letter in no way takes away from the power of the letter.

- ### C. Purpose of the epistle. It seems to be a direct refutation of some form of Gnosticism. Docetic Gnosticism was a real problem in the early church. “Docetic” Gnosticism comes from the Greek word

dokeo, meaning to seem. The Docetic Gnostics said Jesus did not actually come in the flesh. He just seemed to be a man. The "Gnostics" claimed to have knowledge that was not available to the less enlightened. From that viewpoint, it not only was error: it was arrogance.

II. Discussion:

A. Salutation (1-3).

1. "The elder unto the elect lady and her children whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they who have known the truth" (1).
 - a. "Elder" from **presbuteros** and is used in various ways in the New Testament. It refers to older people (1 Tim. 5:1-2), to the leaders in the nation of Israel (Acts 23:14-15), elders of the Lord's church (Acts 14:23) and perhaps others. Identifying the elder may not be absolutely possible, although most conservative scholars seem to think it is the elderly apostle John.
 - b. "Elect lady" may be a faithful Christian woman, a woman by that name (although that is unlikely) or a congregation.
 - c. "Her children." This would seem to make the "elect lady" a Christian the apostle John knew. It is not absolutely conclusive, but it does seem to lean in that direction.
 - d. "Whom I love in the truth."
 - (A) The pronoun "whom" (**hous**) would refer to the woman and her children – not just to the woman.
 - (B) One of the key words in understanding John's writings is the word "love." **Agapao** is used in John 37 times; 26 times in 1 John; 2 times in 2 John and 1 time in 3 John. The noun **agape** appears seven times in 1 John, two times in 2 John and

- 1 time in 3 John. John uses the Greek **agapetos** (beloved) five times in 1 John, 4 times in 3 John.
- (C) John uses the word **phileo**, love like a brother, 13 times in John and never in either 2 John or 3 John.
- (D) "Truth" (**aletheia**) is another of the key words in John's writings—25 times in John, nine times in 2 John and six times in 3 John. **Alethes** means genuine. Sometimes translated "indeed."
- (E) The word "truth" in this context means the absolute truth God has revealed through Jesus Christ.
2. "For the truth's sake, which dwells in us, and shall be with us" (2).
- a. "For the truth's sake."
- (A) Since Jesus is the truth (John 14:6), John may be speaking of him or he may simply be speaking of the message Jesus and His apostles delivered.
- (B) John, the elect lady and her children all loved the truth and shared the same hope.
- (C) If the postmodernists were right that truth does not exist or we cannot know it, John's emphasis on the truth makes no sense.
- b. The truth dwelled in John and his fellow Christians. The word "dwell" is present participle and involves continuous action.
- (A) The Greek word **meno** appears often in John's writings. The word is translated "abide," "remain" and "tarry."
- (B) Examples from John's writings:
- (1) "He who says he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6).

- (2) "I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14).
- c. "The truth...shall be with you."
 (A) God gave them and us the truth to guide all of us into paths of righteousness.
 (B) Without the truth guiding us, we would not know right and wrong. There is no sure basis for determining right and wrong except the teaching of God's word.
3. "Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (3).
- a. John uses this familiar form of greeting in this letter only.
- b. We are familiar with this greeting since Paul uses it extensively in his letters.
- c. "Grace" means the unmerited favor of God. Without His grace, hope for eternity would be dead.
- d. "Mercy" is necessary since none of us can earn our salvation. If God did not extend mercy to us, we would be lost. We must also show mercy to others.
- e. "Peace" (Shalom in the Hebrew) will attend our lives if we constantly seek peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3:10-12). We must be peacemakers to seek God (Matt. 5:9). Troublemakers will not see God.
- B. John's commendation of the elect lady and her children (4). "I rejoice greatly that I have found of your children walking in the truth, as we have received commandment from the Father."

1. "I rejoice greatly that I found your children walking in the truth."
 - a. Paul was encouraged by the coming of Titus, and by the "consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more" (2 Cor. 7:7).
 - b. "What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18).
 - c. What greater joy than to learn that our brothers and sisters are remaining faithful to Christ!
 - d. "Walking in the truth." "Walking" a present participle.
 - (A) In just four verses, John has used the word "truth" five times. That ought to give us some insight into the importance of truth for Christians.
 - (B) Walking in the truth must be our constant concern. Only as we believe and obey the truth can we be saved.
 2. "The truth" John had in mind could be known only by the commandment he and others had received from the Father.
 - a. There is no other source of truth about the will of God.
 - b. The charismatic preachers on television are not receiving any truth except that which is found in the Bible. To pretend otherwise is to be dishonest.
- C. Admonitions or exhortations (5-6).
1. "And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I write a new commandment unto you, but

that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another" (5).

- a. The word "beseech" (**parakaleo**) means to beg, to exhort, to urge, to warn. It literally means to call to your side someone for comfort and encouragement.
 - b. He urged the "lady" to love.
 - (A) The commandment to love is not a new commandment, and yet there are new elements of it.
 - (B) "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him, and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shines" (1 John 2:7-8). Cf. John 13:34-35; 15:12-14.
 - c. The commandment to love was from the beginning—not the beginning of time—but the beginning of the gospel in their hearts.
 - d. The command to love one another is universal in application. We must even love our enemies.
2. "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This the commandment, That as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it" (6).
- a. Sometimes love seems to be defined in an emotional way. "I feel good about someone or some thing." Emotions have their place in serving God, but we must depend on absolute truth—not our emotions.
 - b. "This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

- (A) "Walk" is a present tense verb. "When we continually walk after His commandments." "Walk" suggests a manner of life.
- (B) It is legitimate to conclude that we do not love God if we fail to keep His commandments? "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Our love for God demands that we keep His commandments (1 John 5:2-3). Keeping God's commandments is not optional.
- c. "This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it."
 - (A) The commandment in this verse is to love one another. Is he speaking of loving our fellow Christians only?
 - (B) "The beginning" would refer to the time when they heard Jesus tell them about loving one another. It would not refer to the beginning of time.
 - (C) "Walk" is present tense. Christians are to continually walk in God's commandments – not just the one about loving one another.
- D. Warnings about being deceived (7-11).
 - 1. "For many deceivers are gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (7).
 - a. The word "for" is not looking back to what has been said about love, but to the admonition of verse 8: "Look to yourselves." Roy Lanier comments: "John is not saying brotherly love ought to be practiced because many deceivers have gone out into the world; rather, he is saying **even though** brotherly

love is to be practiced, it must be practiced with some discrimination **because** there are many deceivers gone forth into the world" (p. 237).

- b. The word "deceiver" is from the Greek **planoi** (**planao**) from which we get our word "planet." The King James Version always translates the Greek "deceiver" except in 1 Timothy 4:1 where it is rendered "seducing" spirits. Thayer says the word means a vagabond, imposter, hence a corrupter, deceiver (p. 515).

(A) "These things I have written unto you concerning them who seduce you" (1 John 2:26). "Seduce" is the verb form of the noun "deceiver." The verb **planao** is almost always translated either "deceive" or "gone astray." Jesus used the verb when He told the Sadducees: "You do always err, not knowing the scriptures" (Matt. 22:19).

(B) If a deceiver cannot lead people astray, why would our Lord and His apostles be concerned about false teachers?

- c. "Are gone out into the world." "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
- d. The particular deceivers John had in mind refused to confess that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh.

(A) These false teachers were known as "docetic gnostics."

(1) The word "gnostic" comes from **gnosis** and means the knowing ones.

The Gnostics claimed to have special insight into the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Many of the New Age adherents are Gnostics. Sylvia Browne, one of the world's most influential psychics, says he is a Gnostic. Some of the feminists also claim to be Gnostics. Many of the feminists embrace some elements of the New Age movement. For example, Gloria Steinem.

- (2) The word "docetic" comes from the Greek *dokeo*, to seem. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he be wise" (1 Cor. 3:18). "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26). The docetic Gnostics argued that Jesus seemed like a man, but He did not become a man. He was God; but not a man.
 - (a) "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us" (John 1:14).
 - (b) "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - (c) The apostle touched him (1 John 1:1). He ate, slept, wept, etc.
- (B) Gnosticism was a major problem in the early church. It seems to have disappeared, but has reared its ugly head in some modern religions and in some semi-religious movements. Gnosticism was a deadly doctrine in ancient times and still is.

- e. The King James Version says "an antichrist," but the Greek reads "the antichrist." The same is true of "the deceiver."
- (A) John "is referring to all those under the influence of this pernicious heresy. It is doubtful John is warning this lady about giving hospitality to only one man, 'the anti-christ;' rather, he warns her of all those who might be conspirators with him or under his influence" (Lanier, p. 238).
- (B) Many modern dispensationalists have blundered over and over in attempting to identify the antichrist. Martin Luther said the Roman Catholic pope was the antichrist; the pope returned the favor. Hitler, Mussolini, Dr. Kissinger, President Reagan and others have been called the antichrist.
- (C) Anyone who opposes our Lord and His teaching is an antichrist.
2. "Look to yourselves, that you lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward" (8).
- a. "Look" from **blepete**, a command for Christians to be alert.
- (A) The word is rendered "see," "behold," "regard," "beware," "take heed" and "perceive." "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).
- (B) In His Olivet discourse, Jesus warned His disciples: "Take heed lest any man deceive you" (Mark 13:5).
- (C) Elders, preachers and other fellow Christians are to watch for us and warn us, but ultimately we are responsible for our behavior.

- b. Is John warning his fellow Christians that they might fall away and be lost? They were in danger of becoming weak and falling away or by being led astray by false teacher.
 - c. Is there a difference between "a full reward" and eternal life? Could some receive eternal life and not receive a great reward (Matt. 5:12)? In other words, are there degrees of bliss in heaven? "If there are full rewards, there are also lesser rewards" (Lanier, p. 239). Paul teaches that each will be judged by the deeds done in the body (2 Cor. 5:10). "It is inescapable that these 'reward' are individual and differ with each person" (Lanier, p. 240).
 - d. But the very least heaven has to offer is better than any of us deserve.
3. "Whosoever transgresses, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son" (9).
- a. Verses 9-11 for some odd reason are very controversial, even in our own brotherhood. I have heard some heated discussions on these verses. The controversy swirls around whether the expression, "doctrine of Christ," means doctrine Christ taught or the doctrine others taught about Him. In technical language, is the expression "subjective genitive" or "objective genitive?" "Subjective genitive" would be the teaching Christ Himself did. "Objective genitive" would be teaching others did about Christ. The grammatical construction does not settle the question. It must be learned from other considerations.
 - b. "Whosoever transgresses" from **proago**, to go

ahead, to go one before. (King James is a translation of the Greek **probainon**: transgress). **Proago** seems to be the right verb. The NASB translates the verb "goes too far," RSV: "goes on ahead" and McCord: "going beyond." The message of this verse seems difficult to miss. We cannot go beyond what God has revealed in His word.

- c. The Greek **proago** is often used in a good sense. Paul uses the word of the prophecies that **went before** about Timothy (1 Tim. 1:18). But the word in our current context involves presumption—going too far. That is the obvious meaning when John adds: "and abides not in the doctrine of Christ." Marvin R. Vincent, **Word Studies in the New Testament** (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1889, reprint, 1956): "The meaning is, **whosoever advances beyond the limits of Christian doctrine**" (vol. 2, p. 395).
- d. "The doctrine of Christ."
- (A) Dr. A. T. Robertson says the expression is subjective genitive, that is, what Christ and His apostles taught. "Not the teaching about Christ, but that of Christ which is the standard of Christian teaching as the walk of Christ is the standard for the Christian's walk" (1 John 2:6) (vol. 6, p. 254).
- (B) B. F. Westcott was one of England's greatest Greek scholars. One of the standard Greek texts is Westcott and Hort. I used that text for many years. Westcott wrote a splendid commentary on the Greek text, **The Epistles of St. John** (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1883, reprint

1960). He calls the expression: "the doctrines which Christ brought, and which he brought first in his own person, and then through his followers (Heb. 2:3). This sense seems better than the **doctrine concerning Christ** and the usage of the N.T. is uniformly in favor of it" (p. 230).

- (C) "The 'teaching of Christ' here is not teaching about Christ, or teaching which is Christian in substance or nature; it is the teaching which Christ did personally and through those whom He inspired. It is the teaching of Christ, because He is, in the final analysis, its author, and from Him it issued. It is thus an infallible standard, and no deviation from it is possible without apostasy" (Guy N. Woods, p. 347).
- e. If we progress beyond what Christ and the apostles taught, we do not have God, that is, we do not have His approval. How can we have God's approval when we fail to give honor to the teaching Christ did? We must continually abide in what Christ and the apostles taught.
- f. If we abide continually in what Jesus and His apostles taught, we have both the Father and the Son.
- (A) This truth ought to be very sobering for all who claim to be followers of Christ.
- (B) If we do not follow Christ's teaching, we are not true and faithful Christians. How can we be true if we do not have the Father and the Son?
- (C) The world is full of strange doctrines—doctrines that neither Christ nor His

apostles taught, such as, "Holy Week and Easter."

- (D) We know Jesus kept the passover, but He did it because He lived under the Jewish covenant. We do not live under that covenant and keep the passover as a religious rite without Judaizing. Galatians informs us of the seriousness of Judaizing. Those who do so will be accursed (Gal. 1:8-9).
4. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (10).
- a. What doctrine did John have in mind—just the idea that Jesus had not come in the flesh? Or did the expression apply to any false doctrine being promoted by men?
- (A) The traveling teachers who denied or failed to preach the doctrine Christ and His apostles taught were not to be received and fellowshipped.
- (B) When churches of Christ join ministerial associations or similar organizations, are they not disobeying the restrictions of this verse? How can we ever fellowship error?
- b. None of this justifies mistreating anyone who differs with us on doctrinal matters. But we cannot support financially or otherwise those who teach and practice error.
- c. The expression, "Neither bid him God speed," involves wishing him God's blessings. The literal rendering of the Greek: "Do not give him greeting." False teachers were not to be received or supported in any way.
5. "He who bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deed" (11).

- a. If we welcome a false teacher into our midst, we are partaking of his evil deeds. How can an eldership bring a wolf in to feed the sheep?
 - b. The word "partaker" is from the Greek **koinonei**, a verb meaning to have fellowship with. The word **koinonos** means a partner. "It should be borne in mind that the churches often met in private homes (Rom. 16:5; Co. 4:15), and if these traveling deceivers were allowed to spread their doctrines in these homes and then sent on with endorsement as Apollos was from Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:27), there was no way of escaping responsibility for the harm wrought by these propagandists of evil. It is not the case of mere hospitality to strangers" (vol. 6, p. 255, Dr. A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**).
- E. John's concluding remarks (12-13).
1. "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full" (12).
 - a. We do not know what more John wanted to say to the recipients of his letter. We do know that sometimes it is not easy to express our feelings on the printed page. This in no way detracts from the power of the written word, but it does show how difficult it is sometimes to write our true love and appreciation.
 - b. John has had much to say in his epistles about writing. "I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him from the beginning....I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him from the beginning" (1 John 2:13-14).
 - c. There are advantages and disadvantages of

- the written word. One advantage is the permanent record of the writing. But a disadvantage is not being able to look into the eyes of our loved ones and change the tone of one's voice.
- d. John wanted to speak face to face with those he loved. By being present with them and telling them of his love and what they needed to hear, their joy could be full.
2. "The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen" (13).
 - a. Since we cannot establish with absolute certainty to whom this letter is addressed—whether a faithful Christian woman or to a local church—we have problems deciding who the "elect sister" is.
 - b. From the importance of the message in 2 John, making that decision does not detract from what we should learn from this small but not insignificant book.
 - c. Either the woman's sister in the flesh or in Christ or another congregation sends greetings to the recipient of this letter.
 - d. "Amen"—so be it.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 2 John

Introduction:

- 1 The author of the epistle refers to himself as "the elder." Is there any other way of identifying who wrote this epistle?
2. To whom did John write the letter? Discuss.
3. What is the purpose of the epistle?

The Text:

- 1 Is the "elect lady" a person or a church?
- 2 Show from this epistle that we must keep the commandments.
- 3 What were the deceivers teaching?
- 4 What does the word "transgress" mean?
- 5 What is the doctrine of Christ? Was it what Christ Himself taught or what others taught about Him?
- 6 The members were not to receive false teachers. Neither bid them God speed. What does bidding them God speed mean?
- 7 Why would John write: "He who bids him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds"?

3 John

The Epistle Of 3 John

I. Introduction:

A. Authorship.

1. The author simply refers to himself as "the elder."
2. There may not be universal agreement that the apostle John is the author of this epistle, but generally speaking, that is accepted as fact.
3. Nothing in the letter requires Johannine authorship, but the weight of evidence leans in that direction.

B. Destination of the letter.

1. "The well beloved Gaius."
2. Three men named Gaius are mentioned in the New Testament: One in Macedonia, one in Derbe and one in Corinth. Gaius was a very common name in the Roman Empire. We cannot be sure if this man was one of the three or an entirely different man. It is likely that he was not of the three.
3. The term, "well beloved," means dear, beloved. It is used of Gaius four times in 3 John alone: 1, 2, 5, 11. The term suggests a very close relationship between the author of this letter and its recipient.

C. To encourage Gaius and Demetrius and to warn of Diotrephes. "Gaius is the dependable layman in the church, Diotrephes is the dominating official, Demetrius the kindly messenger from Ephesus with the letter, a vivid picture of early church life and missionary activity" (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures in the New Testament**, Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, volume 6, 1933, p. 259).

II. Discussion:

A. Greetings from John (1-2).

1. "The elder unto the wellbeloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth" (1).
 - a. "Elder" from **presbuteros**, older. The word is used of elders in the church, but it is also used of older men. There is no evidence that John ever served as an elder of the church, but by the time he wrote this epistle, he was an older man.
 - b. We cannot identify Gaius, but what John says about him makes us know that he was a righteous man.
 - c. "Whom I love in the truth."
 - (A) John loved Gaius because of Gaius' faithfulness in serving the Lord.
 - (B) John uses the word "truth" (**aletheia**) six times in this short epistle. He uses the word **alethes** (true) one time. One of the keys to understanding John's writings is the word "truth." John would not have agreed with modern liberals that truth does not exist or that man cannot know it or that it makes no difference in men's lives.
2. "Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers" (2).
 - a. "Beloved" shows the great respect and affection John had for Gaius. How the two came to know each other and how they had worked together, we simply are not told. But we know enough to understand the depth of their devotion to each other.
 - b. "Wish" means to pray for, to desire. Most versions render the Greek "I pray" (RSV, NASB, ESV).

- c. "Prosper" from **euodoo** and can mean, but does not always, financial prosperity.
- (A) This is one of the main texts of those who preach the so-called "health and wealth" gospel—which is not a true gospel.
- (B) If we must be prosperous financially or healthy physically, many of the so-called "saints" through the ages have not been faithful.
- (1) There were times when Paul was hungry (Phil. 4:14).
 - (2) Epaphroditus had been ill to the point of death (Phil. 2:25-30). He was near death because of his work for the cause of Christ.
 - (3) Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim. 4:20).
 - (4) Was God displeased with Paul, Epaphroditus and Trophimus? Is that the reason he allowed Paul to be hungry and poor and the other two men to be ill? It is insulting to even ask the questions.
- d. John prayed that Gaius might be in good health, just as we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ. But if they are not well, does that mean they are sinners? I deeply resent the teaching of the Pentecostals that illness means a lack of devotion to the cause of Christ. Molly was one of the most godly people I have ever known and yet she died of cancer. The leaders in the "health and wealth" movement may be wealthy, but their supporters are not necessarily. They will all get sick and die.
- e. John prayed that Gaius might prosper—but

not necessarily financially. He also prayed that he might be in good health—just as his soul prospered.

(A) Financial prosperity may be detrimental to many people. There is no scripture that teaches that God expects all His servants to be rich.

(B) We all desire good health, but sometimes sickness can bring people to understand their need for God.

B. John's commendations of Gaius (3-8).

1. "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, even as you walk in the truth" (3).

a. John was not rejoicing because Gaius was rich and healthy, although he may have been both. John rejoiced greatly because Gaius had the truth and was living according to truth.

b. We do not know who the brethren were that testified to the faithfulness of Gaius. But such good news was most encouraging to John.

c. If John were living today, would he find the same joy in our knowledge of the truth and our commitment to it? Two questions are in order:

(A) Do we know the truth as revealed in the Bible?

(B) Are we living that truth?

d. We can never learn as much of the truth as we need to know simply by listening to preachers, although that is one way God expects us to use. We must spend countless hours in reading and studying the Bible.

e. "Walk" in a present tense verb and shows

- that Gaius was continually walking in the truth.
2. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (4).
 - a. Should not that be the attitude of every preacher, elder, parent, school teacher and other leaders?
 - b. What a thrill it is to me to know that my former students are making good family members and good Christians!
 - c. What does it mean to "walk in the truth?"
 - (A) It means at least that we can know the truth?
 - (B) "Walking" usually refers to the way we live.
 - (C) The tense of the verb means continually walking in the truth. If faithfulness is not required, why would John use this kind of language? Cf. 2 John 4.
 3. "Beloved, you do faithfully whatsoever you do to the brethren and to strangers" (5).
 - a. Over and over John emphasizes the love he has for his brothers and sisters in Christ. He uses the word "beloved" many times in his writings. Four times in this short epistle alone.
 - b. Faithfulness in doing the will of God is not one option among many. God requires that we be faithful.
 - c. The King James Version uses the word "do" two times in this verse. The first word should be translated "do," but the second word should be rendered "work" or "wrought." Paul used both words in the same sentence. "Whatsoever you do (**poieo**), do (**ergazo**) heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Col. 3:23).
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- d. John does not specify what Gaius had done to the brethren, and to strangers.
 - (A) We know he had served both groups. He probably had fed and clothed both groups. Our good works are not to be confined to brethren only. Cf. Gal. 6:10.
 - (B) Faithful Christians must be concerned about teaching the lost and leading them to Christ. But we must also minister to the physical and emotional needs of the lost.
 - (C) "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Heb. 13:2).
 - (D) "Given to hospitality" is one of the qualifications of an elder (1 Tim. 3:2). The word "hospitality" comes from the Greek **philoxenias**, literally "love of strangers."
- 4. "Who have borne witness of your charity before the church: whom if you bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, you shall do well" (6).
 - a. Did both brethren and strangers "bear witness" of Gaius' charity (love)?
 - b. Had Gaius housed and fed the brethren and strangers? We do not know, but we know what our duties are in helping others.
 - c. Apparently both brothers and strangers "had born witness of Gaius' love. What a testimony for a faithful brother in Christ! Gaius was following in the footsteps of our Savior. Peter told Cornelius and his household: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were

- oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38)
- d. John encouraged Gaius to bring forward the brethren and strangers on their journey after a godly sort, literally in a manner worthy of God. "Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with you company" (Rom. 15:24).
 - e. "You do well." Notice again the emphasis on the word "do." John uses some form of the word "do" fifteen times in his epistles alone.
5. "Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (7).
- a. "Because for his name's sake" would give us insight into the faith the preachers and other Christians went forth.
 - (A) Is he speaking only or primarily of preachers and missionaries or of all Christians who work at spreading the gospel?
 - (B) "They who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the gospel" (Acts 8:4).
 - (C) Obviously preachers were vital to the church's growth in the early centuries of the church's existence. But it is unlikely it would have grown so rapidly had it not been for people other than preachers. We do not know who established the church of our Lord in Rome. Could it have been some of those who were scattered abroad (Acts 8:4)?
 - b. The missionaries and others went forth without taking anything from non-members.

“John is anxious that Christian missionaries receive nothing from the heathen, as our missionaries have to watch against the charge of being after money. They are many travelling lecturers out for money” (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 6, p. 262). But surely the religious world has changed in the past several hundred years! Are there preachers and missionaries who are out for money?

6. “We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth” (8).
 - a. We should be careful – both as churches and as individual Christians – about the way we spend money on preachers and on missionaries.
 - b. We have an obligation to the best of our ability to support worthy efforts.
 - (A) Missionaries must prove themselves to be trustworthy before they have a right to be supported.
 - (B) The International Gospel Hour must prove itself to be worthy of support. After seventy years, it seems the work has been endorsed by many churches and by thousands of individuals.
 - c. If a preacher or a missionary is standing firm in the truth, when we support, we are “fellow-helpers to the truth.” The expression reads, “Fellow-workers with the truth.”
 - d. If we support a false teacher, are we not being fellow-workers with error? We cannot support such men; nor can we bid them God speed (2 John 9-11). Fellowshiping false teachers is a very serious matter.
- C. Diotrophes, the dictator (9-11).
 1. “I wrote unto the church: but Diotrefes, who

loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us" (9).

- a. Blessed is the church that does not have a Diotrephes!
- b. I have actually seen very few men in the church who had the arrogant attitude of Diotrephes.
- c. I remember a deacon who was the treasurer of a church in another state. He was also the president of the local bank where the church kept its money. He would not tell the elders and others how much money the church had in the bank. He said he was afraid the members would quit giving.
- d. John knew the great damage a man like Diotrephes does to the church. So he wrote to the church warning of the great harm Diotrephes would do if nothing were done about him.
- e. No church can prosper when a man like Diotrephes is in charge. Such men must be stopped.
- f. He loved to have the preeminence.
 - (A) The Greek **philoprotos**, **philos**, love, and **protos**, first place.
 - (B) The attitude of Diotrephes is the very opposite of the attitude Christians ought to have.
 - (C) The apostles apparently were very much concerned about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus took a little child and set him in the midst of them. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 28:1-2, 4).

- (D) "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).
- (E) The Pharisees loved "the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called men, Rabbi, Rabbi. "But be not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even Christ, and all you are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant" (Matt. 23:6-11).
- g. "Does not receive us." The "us" would likely be John and his fellow missionaries. Diotrephes wanted control of all that went on in the church. He was a religious dictator.
2. "Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and forbids them who would, casts them out of the church" (10).
- a. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, John had considerable authority. When he visited the church where Diotrephes was dictating, he would remember the harm the man was doing.
- b. Dr. A. T. Robertson says he wrote an article for one of the Baptist periodicals. The editor told him that twenty-five deacons stopped taking the paper to show their resentment

- against being personally attacked in the paper (**Word Pictures**, volume 6, p 263).
- c. We do not know what position Diotrephes held or if he held any position. He wanted to dominate the church he attended.
 - d. The word "prating" comes from **phularos** and means "babbling" (1 Tim. 5:13), to accuse idly and so falsely (Robertson, volume 6, p. 264).
 - e. "Malicious words" from **logois poneriois**, wicked or evil words. These words were intended to hurt, to do damage to the object of the words.
 - f. Diotrephes was not content with speaking evil words. He would not receive the brethren and forbid them who would. "Forbid" from **koluo**, to hinder. We do not know exactly what he did, but we know the harm such behavior does to the cause of Christ.
 - g. He also casts them out of the church. John used the same verb of those who were cast out of the temple for profaning it (John 2:15).
 - h. What motivates a man like Diotrephes? Pride? Power? Plain meanness?
3. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He who does good is of God; but he who does evil has not seen God" (11).
 - a. Again take notice of the many times John uses the word "beloved" in this short epistle.
 - b. "Follow not that which is evil."
 - (A) "Follow" from **mimeomai**, to mimic, to imitate. The tense of the verb says, "Do not get in the habit of imitating that which is evil."

- (1) "For yourselves know how you ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you... Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us" (2 Thess. 3:7, 9).
 - (2) "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Heb. 13:7).
- (B) Follow that "which is good." Although the word "follow" is not used in this clause, we know it is inferred.
- (C) Questions relating to good and evil.
- (1) What is the standard by which we determine good and evil?
 - (2) Are there activities that are always evil and some that are always good?
 - (3) If good and evil are purely human ideas, it makes no sense to speak of absolute right and wrong.
 - (4) There are many outstanding books that discuss these ideas—right and wrong:

Kathleen M. Gow, **Yes, Virginia, there is right and wrong** (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1985).

Harry and Betty Dent, **Right vs. Wrong: Solutions to the American Nightmare** (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992).

William Kirk Kilpatrick, **Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong** (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler, **Right from Wrong: What You Need to**

Know to Help You Make Right Choices (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1994).

Tammy Bruce, **The Death of Right and Wrong: Exposing the Left's Assault on Our Culture and Values** (New York: Forum, 2003).

- (5) There are few topics that are more pertinent to our daily lives and more controversial in our culture.
- (D) We must constantly follow that which is good and spurn that which is evil.
- (1) "Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). "Overcome" from **nikao**, to win the victory.
- (2) "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22).
- (E) Millions of America's young people do not know right from wrong. Their parents have not taught them. Television, the movies and popular songs have confused them beyond our comprehension. If we are going to stop the free fall into destruction, we must teach and exemplify the values our children must know and observe.
- c. "He who does good is of God."
- (A) Again, we must not make the mistake of teaching that doing good alone means we belong to God. We must do good, but we must also believe in the Son of God and obey His gospel.
- (B) If we fail to do good according to God's standard of goodness, we have not

seen God, that is, we have not really known Him as our God.

- D. The faithfulness of Demetrius. "Demetrius has a good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record; and you know our record is true" (12)
1. We know very little about Demetrius, but what we do know shows him to be a faithful servant of the Lord. What is involved in being a faithful servant of the Lord?
 - a. Does it mean just attending the services of the church?
 - b. Does it mean we must learn as much as possible about the Bible?
 - c. Does it involve making a great effort to bring others to Christ?
 - d. Does it mean giving of our time, talent, effort and money to support the cause of Christ?
 2. "Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone" (ESV).
 3. "It has been witnessed to Demetrius (dative case) by all" (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures**, volume 6, p. 265).
 4. "A good report...of the truth itself." This is an unusual expression. Is he personifying the truth?
 - a. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).
 - b. "This is he who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6).
 - c. Roy Lanier, Jr.: "More likely it is the case that Demetrius' life is in harmony with

the truth; that is, he walks in harmony with the truth and thus the truth witnesses to his way of life. The good report of all the brethren is linked with this and is the reason why they can give their good report. They have seen his life to be in harmony with the truth" (pp. 276-277).

E. Concluding remarks (13-14).

1. "I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto you" (13).
 - a. It would be vain for us to speculate about what John might have liked to write to the members of the body of Christ.
 - b. Sometime it is not possible to express fully what we have on our hearts by writing a letter. Our body language is very vital in fully expressing our feelings.
 - c. Roy Lanier, Jr.: "Ink (**melanos**) was a form of soot, or lampblack mixed with oil and gum. It was allowed to harden and was stored in stick form for future use. The pen (**kalamou**) was a sharpened reed, often split to produce sharper points" (p. 278).
2. "But I trust I shall shortly see you, and we shall speak face to face. Peace to you. Our friends salute you. Greet the friends by name" (14).
 - a. "Trust" comes from the Greek **elpidzo** and means hope—not truth.
 - b. "Shortly" from **eutheos** and shows the urgency of his visit.

(A) Was that because of his need to rebuke Diotrephes? "Wherefore when I come, I will remember his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither does he himself receive the brethren, and

forbids them who would, and casts them out of the church" (3 John 10).

(B) The same word is used in reference to Christ's rescuing Peter from sinking (Matt. 14:30-31).

- c. "Face to face" from **stoma pros stoma**, literally "mouth to mouth."
- d. "Peace be to you." Peace with God, with one's fellowmen and with oneself.
- e. "Our friends salute you." Calling his fellow believers "friends" is an unusual manner of speaking. Jesus did refer to Lazarus as "our friend" (John 11:11). He also said: "You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you to do" (John 15:14).
- f. John urges the recipient of the letter to greet the friends by name. We do not know who they were, but the one who received the letter did.

III. Conclusion

This little book may not be quoted often, but it has a great number of valuable lessons in it. The Holy Spirit intended for us to learn the lessons this book teaches or He would not have included it in the New Testament.

Living For Jesus: Questions For 3 John

Introduction:

- 1 To whom did John address this epistle?
- 2 What was the purpose or purposes of the letter?

The Text:

- 1 We have no way of identifying Gaius, but John speaks highly of him. What did he say?
- 2 What did John mean by praying that Gaius would prosper? Does that necessarily mean financial prosperity?
- 3 What does it mean "to walk in the truth?"
- 4 Whom had Gaius helped?
- 5 Gaius had apparently helped preachers or missionaries. What had he done for them?
- 6 What does "preeminence" mean? What was Diotrephes striving to accomplish?
- 7 Diotrephes was "prating against John and others with malicious words." Explain.
- 8 If postmodernists were right about man's inability to be certain, why does God speak of not following that which is evil?
- 9 Demetrius had a good report of "the truth itself." Explain.

Jude

The Epistle Of Jude

I. Introduction:

A. The book of Jude is not one of the best known books of the New Testament.

1. Some of the message of Jude is so negative that some preachers and other Christians seem to choose to ignore it.
2. The book was designed to warn of false teachers. In this respect it resembles the book of 2 Peter. Both books seem to be referring to the same false teachers. 2 Peter 2 seems to be saying, "False teachers are on the way." Jude seems to be saying, "The false teachers Peter had in mind are with us."
3. Because 2 Peter 2 and Jude have so much in common, the world of scholarship has concluded that one had to borrow from the other.
 - a. If both books are inspired, why would either writer have to borrow from the other?
 - b. If both books are not inspired, there is no point in our studying and preaching them.

B. The author.

1. The author calls himself Judas which comes into English as Jude.
2. The name Judas was very common in Bible times, as is evident by the number of Judases who are mentioned in the Bible.
 - a. Judas Iscariot is probably the best known and the most infamous. He was selected as one of the original twelve apostles (Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16). This Judas is usually portrayed as the one who betrayed Christ.

- b. Another Judas is mentioned in this way:
 "Judas says unto him, not Iscariot, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world" (John 14:22)?
 - c. Judas of Damascus (Acts 9:11).
 - d. Judas Barsabbas (Acts 15:22).
 - e. The author of our book identifies himself as a "brother of James" (Jude 1:1).
 - (A) Judas was one of the brothers of our Lord (Matt. 13:55)
 - (B) James was also a brother of our Lord. It is almost universally agreed that the Jude who wrote this book and James, the brother of Christ, wrote the book of James.
 - (C) John tells us that Christ's brothers did not believe on Him (John 7:5).
3. Why more information is not given about Jude we have no way of knowing.
- C. Canonicity.
- 1. The book of Jude has been one of the most widely rejected of any New Testament books.
 - 2. Many of the early writers on Christianity—the so-called "church fathers" did not mention Jude at all.
 - 3. The evidence for the authenticity of the book is very strong. One of the reasons it was questioned in early as well as in later times is Jude's use of apocryphal books. "Apocryphal" books were those books which were not included in the canon because of questions about authorship or content. The Roman Catholic Church has included a number of apocryphal books in their Bibles—1 & 2 Macabees, Ecclesiasticus, et al.
 - 4. One of the major modern criticisms against Jude is its negative qualities. Jude and 2 Peter 2 are

not the favorite books of men like Robert Schuller and Norman Vincent Peale.

D. The people to whom Jude wrote.

1. "To them that are sanctified by the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude 1).
 - a. These words give us some insight into the kind of people Jude was addressing.
 - b. They were sanctified, preserved and called. However, we know nothing about where they lived, who they were or what conditions under which they lived.
2. Often New Testament writers identify the city and the people to whom they are writing, but Jude does not. Why he does not we simply are not told. There is no point in speculating.

E. The relationship of Jude to 2 Peter 2.

1. There is no way we can decide who is dependent upon whom or why anyone has to be dependent on another.
2. Both men wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Why would Jude have to copy from Peter or Peter (an apostle) from Jude (the brother of our Lord)?
3. Bible scholars often try to make a name for themselves by inventing and promoting some novel approach to the scriptures. One writer, for example, published a book arguing that Jesus was a married man.
4. Scholars such as I have just mentioned do great damage to the cause of Christ by creating doubt concerning the inspiration and authority of the scriptures.

F. The date of Jude.

1. There is no way we can determine an exact date for Jude.
2. No incidents are mentioned which help us in deciding a date.

3. John A. T. Robinson, a bishop of the Church of England and a very liberal scholar argues that every New Testament book – including Revelation – was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. He makes a very good case for his position.

G. Jude's approach.

1. He speaks very firmly, boldly and vigorously.
2. He appeals to Old Testament history as well as to secular history.
3. His deep concern for the lost and the unfaithful comes through very plainly.
4. He seeks to prevent erosion from the faith by warning of false teachers who were either already among them or were coming in the near future.

II. The text.

A. Jude's greetings to his readers (1-2).

1. "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (1).
 - a. We know practically nothing about the author of this epistle. There has been a great amount of speculation about Jude, but it is not worth discussing.
 - b. What we do know about him makes us sure of his faithfulness in the Lord's kingdom.
 - c. "The servant of Jesus Christ."
 - (A) "Servant" comes from the Greek **doulos** and means slave or bondservant.
 - (1) Other New Testament writers use the same word in reference to themselves.
 - (2) "Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:1).

- (3) "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1).
 - (4) "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1).
 - (5) The word "servant" (**doulos**) means one who is wholly owned by another. Since Christians are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20), we belong to Christ; we are his servants (Rom. 6:16).
- (B) "The brother of James."
- (1) So far as we know, James the apostle did not have a brother named Jude.
 - (2) But James, the Lord's brother, had a brother named Jude (Matt. 13:55).
 - (3) It is the consensus of the scholarly community – both liberal and conservative – that Jude was a brother of Jesus Christ and of James.
- (C) "To them that are sanctified by God the Father."
- (1) The word "sanctified" (**hagiazō**) literally means "set apart." It is closely related to the word "holy."
 - (2) If you have any other version than the King James, it will probably read, "Beloved (**egapemenois: agapao**). The Greek manuscripts differ in this text. But what real difference does it make?"
- (D) "Preserved in Jesus Christ."
- (1) "Preserved" from **tereo** and means to keep, to watch over.
 - (2) Peter used the same Greek word in the following passage: "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled,

and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

- (3) There can be no question about the Lord's keeping or preserving us. But we are kept conditionally or unconditionally? "We are kept (**phroureo**) by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

(E) "Called" (**kletois**).

- (1) How are men and women called into God's service? "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14).

- (2) We Christians are also called to service in the Lord's vineyard. "To every man his work" (Mark 13:34).

2. "Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied (2).

- a. "Mercy" (**eleos**) is very closely related to grace. I am not sure I can always make a distinction. Jesus tied our receiving mercy to our extending mercy. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

- b. "Peace" (**eirene**) appears very prominently throughout the Old Testament and the New, although it is not quite so in the lives of God's people.

(A) Isaiah predicted that the Jewish Messiah would be the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

(B) His mission on earth was to make peace between men and God and between men and men (Eph. 2:11-16).

- (C) Christ demands that His people promote peace.
- (1) "Let us therefore flow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).
 - (2) "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).
 - (3) "If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18).
- c. "Love" from **agape**, unconditional love, unconquerable benevolence.
- (A) "God is love" (1 John 4:8).
 - (B) "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). Some versions read: "We love because he first loved us" (RSV).
 - (C) Paul teaches:
 - (1) The essentiality of love (1 Cor. 13:1-3).
 - (2) The qualities of love (1 Cor. 13:4-8).
 - (3) The permanence of love (1 Cor. 13:9-13).
 - (D) The whole story of human redemption is one of love: God's love for us and our love for him.
- B. Jude's reasons for writing (3-4).
1. "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you, of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (3).
 - a. "Beloved" (**agapetoi**) shows how much Jude loved the people to whom he wrote. Even though he had to be very harsh at

- times, his concern was for their welfare.
- b. "Gave all diligence to write unto you."
- (A) "Gave" from **poioumenos**, to do, to make. RSV: "Being very eager."
- (B) "Diligence" from **spouden**, means to hasten to do an act, earnestness, zeal, endeavor.
- (1) The urgency of the situation demanded that he write at once.
- (2) Other uses of the same word.
- (a) "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge" (2 Peter 1:5).
- (b) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).
- (C) "To write" (**graphein**) shows the importance of God's written word.
- (1) John continually emphasizes the importance of writing (1 John 2:1, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 21). "I write unto you;" "I have written unto you."
- (2) Paul uses a form of the same word when he talks about the inspiration of all scripture (**graphe**).
- (3) Jesus said to the devil, "It is written (**gegraptai**: literally "it stands written") (Matt. 4:4, 6, 10).
- c. "Of the common salvation."
- (A) "Common" from the Greek **koines**.
- (1) The word "common" suggests available to everyone. Vine says it stands in contrast to **idios**, one's own.

- (2) New Testament Greek is called **koine** Greek – common Greek – the Greek used by the man in the street.
 - (3) Our word “fellowship” comes from the Greek **koinonia** and means having something in common.
 - (4) “And all that believed were together, and had all things in common” (Acts 2:44).
 - (5) “To Titus, mine own son after the common faith” (Titus 1:4).
- (B) One would think off hand that everybody knows the meaning of salvation. But many modernistic theologians think of salvation in terms of relieving the oppressed, distributing wealth to the poor and restructuring society. Liberation theology, the Women’s Liberation Movement and many within the civil rights movement have that kind of salvation in mind when they discuss salvation.
- d. “It was needful for me to write unto you.”
- (A) “Needful” from **anagken**, constrained, necessary.
 - (B) “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16)!
 - (C) “Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).
 - (D) Writing preserved Jude’s message for human beings in all ages until the end of the world.

- e. "Exhort you."
- (A) The Greek for exhort is **parakaleo**, **para**, beside, **kaleo**, to call.
 - (B) The word involves comfort, warning, urging.
 - (C) The noun form (**parakletos**) is used in reference to the Holy Spirit (John 14:26) and Christ (1 John 2:1 – where it is translated "advocate").
 - (D) "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).
- f. "Contend earnestly" from **epagonizesthai**, **epi**, upon, **agonizomai**, to contend.
- (A) The word involves a contest, fighting – not being contentious or pugnacious.
 - (B) **Agon** or **agoni**.
 - (1) "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race (**agona**) that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).
 - (2) The word is also translated "fight" – both as a noun and as a verb.
 - (a) "Fight (verb: **agonizou**) the good fight (**agona**) of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you were called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses" (1 Tim. 6:12).
 - (b) "I have fought (**egonismai**) a good fight (**agona**), I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7).

- (C) If we are in a contest or a fight, who is our adversary?
- (1) We are not fighting people. Our warfare is not carnal.
 - (2) We are fighting the devil—our adversary (1 Peter 5:8).
 - (3) We are fighting all false doctrine and all false moral positions.
 - (4) Some Christians resent our use of the word “fight” but the Bible is not squeamish about using it.
 - (5) Paul encourages all Christians to put on the whole armor of God and then to stand (Eph. 6:10-18).
- g. “The faith.”
- (A) This expression does not refer to “your faith” or “my faith” but “the faith.”
 - (B) “The faith” is synonymous with the gospel, the system of faith, the gospel plan of salvation.
 - (C) “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith” (Acts 6:7).
 - (D) “But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preaches the faith which once he destroyed” (Gal. 1:23).
 - (E) Paul called Timothy his son in “the faith” (1 Tim. 1:2). He warned that some shall depart from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1). He said that some have denied the faith (1 Tim. 5:8) and some have erred from the faith (1 Tim. 6:10, 21).
- h. “Once.” **Hapax** in the Greek means “once for all.”

- (A) Many television evangelists insist they are continually receiving communications directly from the Lord.
- (B) Pat Boone says members of the body of Christ should be open to new information the Lord wishes to impart unto His people? What information do we need we do not have in the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3)?
- (C) Vine defines the word: "Once for all, of what is of perpetual validity, not requiring repetition" (p. 809).
- (D) Examples of its use:
- (1) "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" (Heb. 6:4).
 - (2) "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after that the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:26-28).
- i. "Delivered" from **paradidomi**, to give over, to hand down. The noun form of this word is translated "tradition" (2 Thess. 3:6). "That form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17). Aorist passive participle: completed.
 - j. "To the saints."

- (A) God gave His word to the saints with the charge that they preach it unto others.
 - (B) Of course, God makes saints through His word, but He gave His word to His own people.
2. "For there were certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (4).
- a. "For there are certain men crept in unawares."
 - (A) Jude explains why it was necessary for him to contend earnestly for the faith.
 - (B) He does not specifically identify "the certain men," but he does warn about their damnable doctrines.
 - (C) "Crept in unawares" from **pareiseduesan**, **para**, beside, **eis**, in, **duo**, to sink or to plunge so to slip in by a side door (A. T. Robertson, **Word Pictures of the New Testament**; Nashville, TN: Broadmen Press, 1933, volume 6, p. 187).
 - (1) When have you ever known a false teacher to hang a sign on his chest saying, "I am a false teacher: beware?"
 - (2) Paul warned the Galatians of the Judaizers who were troubling the Lord's people. "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in (**pareisaktous**: to bring in privily or to bring in beside, to introduce secretly).
 - (3) "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall

be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1).

b. "Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation."

(A) The word "ordained" (**prographmenoi**) really means written beforehand.

(1) "O foolish Galatians, who has betwicked you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth (**prographe**) crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1)?

(2) "For whatsoever things were written beforehand (**prographe**) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

(3) Other versions translate the verb "set forth." Our word "programmed" comes from this Greek word.

(B) He is not promoting the doctrine of predestination, at least, not in a Calvinistic sense. The condemnation for false teachers and unfaithful children of God was set forth "of old." The expression, "of old," probably refers to verses 14 and 15.

c. "Ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness."

(A) The term, "ungodly men," has a very broad application. "Ungodly" comes from the Greek **asebeis**, irreverent, acting contrary to God's commands. "And Enoch

also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which the ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him" (Jude 14-15).

- (B) "Turning" from **metatithemi**, to change. The verb is a present active participle, continually turning the grace of God into lasciviousness.
- (C) God's grace had been revealed to these Christians, but they turned it into lasciviousness.
 - (1) "As free, and not using our liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (1 Peter 2:16).
 - (2) "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage" (2 Peter 2:19).
- (D) "Lasciviousness" from **aselgeia** and indicates the very darkest of sins.
 - (1) Vine defines the word as licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness (p. 640).
 - (2) The word involves a complete abandonment of the good, the true and the righteous. It involves shameless conduct.
 - (3) "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine,

revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries" (1 Peter 4:3).

- (E) They seemed to think that because they were free in Christ they could live any way they chose. There are some theologians who take exactly this position. We are free in Christ; we are not under law but under grace. The grace of God will compensate for our sins – fornication, adultery, homosexuality, drunkenness, etc. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called this “cheap grace,” but it is a flaunting of God’s love and goodness.
- d. “And denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - (A) The behavior of the false teachers was an actual denial of our only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (B) These false teachers probably never publicly denied the existence and goodness of God, but their behavior gave the impression they did not believe in God or in Christ.
 - (C) Notice the parallel with 2 Peter 2:1: “But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”
 - (D) What is left when men and women deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ? If we deny God and Christ, what moral standards shall we honor? What hope is there of life beyond the grave?

What if Christianity is not true? "To whom shall we go" (John 6:66-168)?

- C. Examples of judgment against the ungodly (5-7).
1. The Israelites. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (5).
 - a. "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this."
 - (A) "I will" from **boulomai**, I wish or I desire.
 - (B) "Put you in remembrance" from **hupomnesai**, bring to your remembrance.
 - (1) Jude was not telling his readers something new; he was simply reminding them of what they already knew.
 - (2) "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, through you know them, are to be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet (appropriate), as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance" (2 Peter 1:12-13).
 - (3) Is that not what most preaching is—putting people in remembrance?
 - (C) "Though you once knew this." They had already learned the great truths of the gospel. "Once" (**hapax**) means once for all. They needed reminding, just as we do.
 - (1) It is significant that Jude says the Christians to whom he was writing

- once "knew" (*eidotas*) the truths he was discussing.
- (2) Modern theologians deny that man can really know anything, but biblical writers never do that. Cf. John 8:32; 2 Tim 1:12.
- b. "How that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt."
- (A) Some manuscripts have "the Lord Jesus" in this verse. Clement of Alexandria thinks Jesus is involved in this passage: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared" (Ex. 23:20). Clement says, "that mystical angel Jesus" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 187). That Jesus was involved in Old Testament history there cannot be the slightest doubt.
- (B) "Having saved the people out of the land of Egypt."
- (1) The account of God's delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is one of the most inspiring stories man could find. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all of our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:1-4).
- (2) "Saved" (*sosas*) in this verse does

not speak of saving the Jews from their sins or saving them for eternity, but delivering them from Egyptian bondage. The word "saved" can be used in all these senses. It can also be used of the healing of a sick person.

c. "Afterward destroyed them that believed not."

(A) God had shown His great love to the Israelites by delivering them from bondage. There was no way the Jews could have had an excuse for not knowing what God had done and the significance of the delivery from Egypt. They were without excuse when they turned away from God to idols.

(B) "Afterward" from **deuteron**, "the second time."

(C) "Destroyed them that believed not."

(1) "Destroyed" from **apolesen**. The word signifies utter destruction.

(2) "And with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be idolators, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of the destroyer (**kai**

apolonto hupo tou alothreutou). Now these things happened unto them for examples: and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:5-11).

- (3) "Believed not." But these were God's own people. If a child of God cannot so sin as to be eternally lost, what difference does it make in the long run if one is destroyed for not believing?
 - (4) 2 Peter 2 does not use Israel as an example of those who were disobedient and had to be punished. Instead he uses the people who were living during the days of Noah. "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly" (2 Peter 2:5).
2. Angels. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (6).
- a. "And the angels which kept not their first estate."
 - (A) Peter used the angels as examples of unfaithfulness and rebellion. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4).
 - (B) Who were these angels who kept not their first estate?
-

- (1) We simply are not told—either in Jude or in 2 Peter.
- (2) Was Satan involved in this rebellion against God?
- (3) The usual interpretation is connected with Isaiah 14:12-15. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."
 - (a) The immediate application was to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon (Isa. 14:4).
 - (b) Some argue that the passage has a secondary application to Satan and other fallen angels.
 - (c) The truth is that many people depend on John Milton's **Paradise Lost**—rather than on the Bible.
- (C) "Kept not" from **tereo**, to preserve, to watch. Did they actually transgress and had to be punished for their behavior? If angels have to be punished for their disobedience, what about fallen men?
- (D) "First estate" from **arche**, usually translated "principality" (Gal. 6:12). The word

- signifies rule, beginning, first place of power (1 Cor. 15:24).
- b. "But left their own habitation."
(A) "Left" from **apoleipo**, to leave behind. The word is used of Paul's leaving behind a cloak (2 Tim. 4:13, 20).
(B) "Habitation" is from **oiketerion**, their own dwelling place. **Oikos** means house. They left the place God has assigned them and were reserved until the judgment to be punished.
- c. "He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto judgment of the great day."
(A) The word "reserved" is the same Greek word translated "kept" in this same verse. God has a place prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41). Those who have rebelled against God's law will be kept for that day of punishment.
(B) "Everlasting bonds" from **aidiois**, meaning always, and **desmois**, bonds. Peter speaks of the angels' being "delivered into chains of darkness" (2 Peter 2:4). There is some question over whether or not the word ought to be "chains" (**seirais**) or "pits of neither gloom" (**seirois**). Frankly, I would not prefer to be kept in either place. Christians would surely want to avoid either.
(C) "Under darkness unto judgment of the great day."
(1) What a terrible description of the reward of the wicked.
(2) "The great day" is the one mentioned earlier (Matt. 25:41).
3. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. "Even as

Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (7).

a. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner."

(A) The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah will live in infamy as long as the world stands.

(B) When Lot "pitched his tent toward Sodom," he made a grievous mistake (Gen. 13:12).

(C) "The cities about them" were Admah and Zeboim (Deut. 29:23). Zoar was another of the "cities about them," but it was spared for Lot's sake (Gen. 19:17-22).

b. "Giving themselves over to fornication."

(A) The people of Sodom, Gomorrah and other cities of the plains had become grossly immoral.

(B) "Fornication" from **ekporneusasai** which indicates a complete abandonment to the sin mentioned.

(1) The common word for "commit fornication" is **porneuo**, to commit any sin of a sexual nature.

(2) The verb in this case **ek**, outside, **porneuo**, to commit fornication.

(3) The following are scholarly ideas about the Greek **ekporneusasai** (having given themselves over to fornication).

(a) "Committed exceeding fornication" (Lenski, *Commentary on Jude*, p. 623).

- (b) The prefix **ek** seems to indicate a lust that gluts itself, satisfies itself completely.
 - (c) **Ek** may suggest against the course of nature (Michael Green, **The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude**, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973, p. 166).
- (C) Peter does not use the same language Jude does, but he does mention Sodom and Gomorrah. "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly; and delivered just (righteous: **dikaion**) Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeking and hearing, vexed his soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds);. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:6-9).
- (D) The word "fornication" does not specifically identify the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as homosexuality, but there can be no doubt when one studies the context of Genesis 19.
- c. "And going after strange flesh."
- (A) There are some who say that the angels of Jude 6 committed fornication with human beings. But there is no justification for such an interpretation.
 - (B) "Strange flesh" from **sarkos heteras**, "unnatural lust" (RSV), "contrary to

nature" (Barnes, James and Jude, p. 392).

- (C) "It is not until we reach the late New Testament books, 2 Peter and Jude, that we find the sin of Sodom connected with homosexual practices...It is plain that the traditional conception of Sodom receives little support from scripture" (D. S. Bailey, **Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition**, Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1975. Originally published by Longmans, Greek and Co., Ltd., London, 1955).
- (D) "Strange flesh" means men's having sexual relations with other men. "And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Rom. 1:27). It is contrary to the way God made us for men to engage in sexual relations with other men or women with other women.
- d. "Are set for an example, suffering vengeance of eternal fire."
- (A) Even the worst of human behavior can be used as an example.
- (B) "Set forth" from **prokeimai**, to be exposed to public view (of corpses lying in state, Aeschylus), to lie exposed. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about (**perikeimenon**) with so great a cloud of witnesses, and the sin which does so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us (**prokeimenon**),

looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him (**prokeimenes**) endured the cross, despising the same, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).

(C) "Example" from **deigma** which comes from **deiknumi**, to show. 2 Peter uses the noun **hupodeigma**, pattern, literally to show under.

(D) "Suffering" from **hupecho**, to hold under and is used figuratively in Jude 7. Robertson says it is used often with words which suggest right, justice, sentence or punishment (volume 6, p. 189).

(E) "Vengeance" from **diken**, justice, "wrath" (Rom. 3:5).

(F) "Eternal fire." Does this mean that unsaved people will suffer eternally?

D. The filthy dreamers compared to Michael, the archangel (8-10).

1. The filthy dreamers. "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities" (8).

a. "The filthy dreamers" (the false teachers of verse 4) from **enupniazomenoi**. The word "filthy" was inserted by the translators. The literal rendering of the Greek reads, "In their dreamings." The false teachers were apparently rejecting God's revelation of His will and receiving their messages from their own dreams or from other imaginary sources.

b. "Defile" from **minaino**, to stain with sin. Peter uses the word **miasmou** (uncleanness or defilement, 2 Peter 2:19). "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are

- defiled (**memiammenois**) and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled (**memiantai**)" (Titus 1:15).
- c. "Despise dominion."
 (A) The verb "despise" (**atheteo**) means to set at nought (ARV), to annul. Vine says the word means to displace, to set aside, to reject, to cast off.
 (B) "Dominion" from **kurioteta** and means "lordship" or "power."
- d. "Speak evil of dignities." "They are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (2 Peter 2:10).
 (A) "Speak evil" from **blasphemousin** (blasphemy), to speak against.
 (B) "Dignities" from **doxas**, usually involving "glory." "Primarily denotes an opinion, estimation, repute; in the New Testament always good opinion, praise, honor, glory, an appearance demanding respect" (Vine, p. 303).
- e. "In their dreamings' they (1) defile the flesh, (2) set at naught dominion, and (3) rail at dignities. They lived in a dreamy world of impurity; they defiled the flesh by sins unspeakably evil (cf. Rom. 1:18-32); they exhibited contempt for all authority, whether civil or divine; and they did not hesitate to speak evil of men though they occupied high places" (Guy N. Woods, **Peter, John and Jude**, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1979, p. 302).
2. Michael the archangel. "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, does not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, the Lord rebuke you" (9).

- a. "Yet Michael the archangel."
- (A) The subject of angels has been the basis for much speculation. Are angels all males? Do they have wings? Does each individual have a "guardian angel?" Are they the spirits of departed human beings? Will we become angels?
- (B) Michael is also mentioned in Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1; Rev. 12:7. He is called "archangel" (**archangelos**) in the New Testament only here and in 1 Thessalonians 4:16. The Old Testament uses the word three times: Daniel 10:13, 20; 12:1.
- b. "When contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses."
- (A) "Contending" from **diakrinomenos**, **diakrino**, to separate, to strive with. "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him" (Acts 11:2). The word "contend" in verse 3 is an entirely different word.
- (B) This is the only reference in the Bible to the archangel's contending with the devil. Speculation regarding this incident can accomplish nothing.
- (C) Knowing the nature of the devil as we do, we should not be surprised at the devil's actions. We may not understand the full import of this contention, but we know the devil's purposes and intentions. He seeks to confuse and to destroy.
- (D) Michael refrains from bringing "a railing accusation" against the devil.
- (1) This certainty does not mean that Christians are not to oppose the devil

with all their might (1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7).

- (2) We must leave the final judgment of the devil to God. The archangel simply said, "The Lord rebuke thee."
 - (3) "Railing accusation" from **krisin blasphemias**, charge of blasphemy. "Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation (**blaphemon krisin**) against him before the Lord" (2 Peter 2:11).
- (E) Many scholars affirm that Jude is quoting from an apocryphal book, **The Assumption of Moses**. He may or may not be. The both may simply have been recording the same even from a common source. The question is not: Was Jude quoting from **The Assumption of Moses**, but is his record reliable and true?
- (F) Criticism of an inspired writer is not within our right.
3. The filthy dreamers speak when they ought to be listening. "But these speak evil of those thing which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (10).
- a. "But these speak evil of those things which they know not."
 - (A) "These" has to refer to the "filthy dreamers" of verse 9. They were the false teachers troubling the churches of Jude's day
 - (B) "Speak evil" from **blasphemousin**, to speak against. **Blasphemia** probably comes from **blapto**, to injure, and **pHEME**, speech.
-

- (C) The false teachers speak evil of "those things they know not."
- (1) I have often been amazed at the childish and unfounded charges against the Bible and against Christianity.
 - (2) Even when charges against the Bible have been answered, the enemies of Christ keep repeating the charges.
 - (3) Is that honesty and academic integrity when the critics ignore the answers to their accusations against the Bible?
- b. "But what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."
- (A) "Naturally" from **phusikos**, without any reference to divine revelation.
 - (B) "As brute beasts" from **aloga** (without speech) **zoa**, beasts or animals. The false teachers are compared to dumb animals. Peter's assessment of the same false teachers: "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption" (2 Peter 2:12).
 - (C) The false teachers are destroying themselves, and, unfortunately, those who follow their pernicious ways (2 Peter 2:1-2).
- E. A woe pronounced on the evildoers (11-13).
1. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah" (11).
 - a. "Woe unto them!"

- (A) Jude was not squeamish about opposing false teachers. "Woes" are often used—both in the Old Testament (Isa. 5:8, 11, 20, 21, 22; Amos 6:1; "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion") and in the New (Matt. 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).
- (B) Did contending for the faith in this instance include vigorous condemnation of false teachers?
- b. "For they have gone in the way of Cain."
 (A) Cain is Jude's fourth example, but Peter does not mention him in 2 Peter 2.
 (B) "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaks" (Heb. 11:4).
 (C) "For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:11-12).
- c. "And ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward."
 (A) "Ran greedily" from **exechuthesan**, to pour out, "vigorous metaphor for excessive indulgence" (Robertson, volume 6, p. 191). The American Revised Version translates the expression, "ran riotously."
 (B) The error of Balaam can be learned from reading about this Gentile prophet in Numbers 22-24.
 (C) "For reward" from **misthos**, pay, wages.
 (1) "Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the

way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet" (2 Peter 2:15-16).

- (2) Christ's letter to the church at Pergamos. "But I have a few things against you, because you have there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2:14).
 - (3) Balaam lives in infamy because of his willingness to sell the word of God for money.
- d. "And perished in the gainsaying of Korah."
- (A) Where in all of God's book can you find a clearer condemnation of religious error? Truth makes men free; error makes slaves of them.
 - (B) "Perish" from **apollumi**, to destroy.
 - (C) "Gainsaying" from **antilogia**, literally against words. The word implies contradiction, dispute, strife, to say against.
 - (D) Korah's story appears in Numbers 16:1-36.
 - (1) Korah, Dathan and Abiram challenged the leadership of Moses and Aaron.
 - (2) They accused Moses of trying to be a king over the nation of Israel.
 - (3) The three rebellious priests said they were just as holy as Moses and Aaron and had just as much right to rule as they did.

- (4) The earth opened up and swallowed the three men who led the rebellion against God's appointed rulers and the men who followed them.
2. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" (12).
- a. This is one of the ugliest pictures of false teachers in all of God's word. Anyone who thinks we ought to coddle and to be tolerant of false teachers either has not read or does not believe Jude's description of false teachers (or Peter's—2 Peter).
- b. "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear."
- (A) There is a textual problem in this verse. Some manuscripts have **spiloi** (spots), just as 2 Peter 2:13 does. Other manuscripts have **spilades**, rocks in the sea (covered by water). The meaning is not changed radically regardless of the correct word. Almost all versions have the word "rock" instead of the word "spots."
- (B) Again, there is a difference in some manuscripts regarding the words "feasts of charity" or "love feasts." Most manuscripts have **agapais** (love feasts) while others have **apatais** as in 2 Peter 2:13. In 2 Peter the word is translated "deceivings." A. T. Robertson thinks "love feasts" should also appear in 2 Peter 2:13.
- (1) The "love feasts" were not the Lord's

supper. It was a common meal which was probably served to the poor, but of which the wealthier members also partook.

(2) In Corinth, the Lord's supper was changed to be a common meal – which Paul strongly condemned. “When you come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating one takes before the other his own supper: and one is hungry and another is drunken. What? have you not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise you the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? I praise you not” (1 Cor. 11:20-22).

(C) The false teachers were motivated by greed. “When they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear.”

(1) Peter uses the same expression. “Sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you” (2 Peter 2:13).

(2) “Feeding themselves without fear.”
(a) Peter spoke of Balaam who “loved the wages of unrighteousness” (2 Peter 2:15).

(b) He accused the false teachers of having “exercised” their hearts with “covetous practices” (2 Peter 2:14).

(c) “And through covetousness shall they with feigned (‘well turned words’) make merchandise of you” (2 Peter 2:3).

- (d) The false teachers were also motivated by lust. "Having eyes full of adultery (literally, an adulteress)" (2 Peter 2:14).
 - (e) Ezekiel was instructed to prophesy against the shepherds in Israel. "Woe be to the shepherds that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat, and you clothe you with the wool, you kill them that are fed: but you feed not the flock" (Ezek. 34:2-3).
 - (f) "Feeding themselves without fear." They apparently were not afraid of God; nor did they respect those they were trying to lead.
 - (g) The word for feeding (**poimainontes**) is shepherding. Dr. A. T. Robertson translates the expression, "Shepherding themselves" (volume 6, p. 191).
- c. "Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds."
- (A) Peter uses a little different figure. "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever" (2 Peter 2:17).
 - (B) Of how much value to the parched ground is a cloud without water, one that is driven about of winds?
 - (C) To the people of Palestine this figure was unquestionably very meaningful. Water is very important to all people, but some people may not take notice of water like the people of the Middle East, of

Africa and of other places where water is very scarce.

- (D) False teachers are worth no more than “wells without water” or “clouds without water.” The false teachers make great promises, but they are unable to deliver.
- d. “Trees whose fruit withers, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”
- (A) If there has ever been a picture of total uselessness, this is it.
- (B) “Trees whose fruit withers” from **dendra phthinoporina**, literally autumn trees which are wasting away.
- (C) “Without fruit” (**akarpa**). “For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:8).
- (D) “Twice dead.” The Greek means “fruitless and having died.”
- (E) “Plucked up by the roots.” This is a picture of utter devastation and fruitlessness. Are false teachers really all that bad? Is not Jude exaggerating the evil influence of false teachers? How can modern preachers refuse to be negative when Jude and Peter are so uncompromisingly opposed to false teachers?
3. “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (13).
- a. “Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame.”
- (A) Jude had no doubt seen the raging of the Mediterranean Sea and of the Sea of Galilee. The location of the Sea of Galilee

- makes it a very dangerous body of water.
- (B) "Raging waves" from **kumata agria**, **kueo**, to swell, and **agros**, field, wild honey. The sea was like wild, untamed animals.
 - (C) "Foaming" (**epahrizo**) out their shames (plural).
- b. "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."
- (A) "Wandering stars" from **asteres planetai**, maybe shooting stars or planets. The verb form of the word – **planao** – (from which we get our word "planet") means to go astray, to wander. It involves leading into error, leading astray. The word is often translated "deceive" or "err" (James 1:16).
 - (B) 2 Peter says, "To whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever" (2 Peter 2:17).
 - (C) Words describing the fate of false teachers could hardly be plainer or more impressive. Modern preachers who allow false teachers to go unchallenged and unrefuted are endangering their own souls.
- F. The prophesy of Enoch (14-16).
- 1. "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints" (14).
 - a. The American Revised Version and other versions have the sentence beginning with, "And to these also Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied."
 - (A) "To these" would probably apply to false teachers of his and all subsequent generations.

- (B) False teachers have arisen in every generation; they are present today and probably always will be (2 Peter 2:1).
- b. Enoch—the man who walked with God and was not because God took him (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5)—was seventh from Adam (Gen. 5:4-20).
 - c. “Prophesied” from **epropheteusen**, to speak for God. In this instance it was referring to the future.
 - d. This information is supposed to come from an apocryphal book, the Book of Enoch. Could it not have come from a common source—the actual occurrence and not from the Book of Enoch?
 - e. “The Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints.”
 - (A) Our word “myriad” comes from the Greek word translated “ten thousand” (**uriasin**). The word literally implies innumerable holy ones (**hagiais**).
 - (B) The setting is one of judgment. “But the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory” (Matt. 25:31).
2. “To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (15).
- a. Do you get the impression that Jude thought false teachers were “ungodly?” The word “ungodly” is used four times in this verse.
 - b. “To execute judgment upon all.”
 - (A) Literally, to do justice (**poesai**: to do). “Judgment” comes from **krisin** and indi-

- cates God's desire to bring justice against evildoers.
- (B) No false teacher will escape the wrath of Almighty God.
- c. "And to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed."
- (A) "Convince" from **exelencho**, an intensified form meaning to convince or to convict thoroughly.
- (1) The word would probably be better translated "convict."
 - (2) Vine defines the word to mean to convict, to confute, usually with the suggestion of putting the convicted person to shame (p. 231).
 - (3) "Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9).
- (B) "Ungodly" from **asebeis**, irreverent, impious, without respect. The word is the opposite of the Greek **eusebeia**, godliness, respect, awe.
- (1) False teachers were the primary ones Jude had in mind, but the future condemnation of the ungodly will extend far beyond false teachers. "All that are ungodly."
 - (2) The Gentiles belonged in the category of the ungodly. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28).
- (C) "Their ungodly deeds."
- (1) Jude does not specify what ungodly deeds he has in mind in this context,

but the scriptures do not leave us in the dark concerning what constitutes "ungodly deeds."

- (2) "Deeds" from **ergon**, works, activities.
- (D) "Which they have ungodly committed."
 - (1) Do you get the impression Jude thought the false teachers were "ungodly?" He used the word four times in this one verse.
 - (2) Most sins begin with the heart that is hardened against God. If we do not respect God, we are likely to commit all kinds of heinous deeds. Romans 1 chronicles this condition.
- d. "And of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."
 - (A) "Hard" from **skleron**, exacting, austere.
 - (1) Paul uses one form of the word when he speaks of the "hardness (**sklerotes**) and impenitent heart" (Rom. 2:5).
 - (2) A number of medical terms use some form of the Greek word: arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), otosclerosis (hardening of the bones of the ear).
 - (B) "Speeches" from **elalesan**. What one says does make a difference. False teachers can and do destroy souls by their hard speeches.
 - (C) "Which ungodly sinners have spoken against them." The language Jude uses may seem harsh and unloving. If he were going to please God and stem the tide of digression, he has no choice except to speak as the Holy Spirit guided him.
- 3. "There are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks

great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage" (16).

a. "Murmurers" from **gongustai**, to grumble, an onomatopoeic word.

(A) "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven....Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves" (John 6:41, 43). "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Does this offend you" (John 6:61)? See also 1 Cor. 10:10 where the word is used two times of the Israelites.

(B) "Complainers" from **mempsimoiroi**, discontented, querulous, rapining (Vine, p. 211). The word suggests one who is discontented with his lot in life. The word is used only here in the New Testament.

(C) "Walking after their own lusts."

(1) Those who think gospel preachers and preachers should soft-pedal false teachers have overlooked or chosen to ignore Jude's inspired writings.

(2) "Walking" not in the original. The verse reads: "according to their own lusts" or "after their own lusts."

(3) "Lusts" from **epithumias**, desires. The context determines whether the word is translated "desires" or "lust."

(D) "And their mouth speaks great swelling words."

(1) Peter uses very similar language. "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much

wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error" (2 Peter 2:18).

- (2) "Swelling" from **huperonkos**, a word which suggests excessive weight or size, arrogant speech. They speak as if they are the great authorities on whatever topic they discuss.
 - (3) Job's friends (?) may well have fallen into that category. Job said to his so-called friends: "No doubt but you are the people, and wisdom shall die with you" (Job 12:2).
- (E) "Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."
- (1) Literally, showing respect of persons.
 - (a) "Admiration" from **thaumazo**, to admire, to wonder at. A thaumaturgist is a wonder-worker, a magician.
 - (b) "Men's persons" from **prosopa**, face, outward appearance or person of standing. A similar Greek expression is used by James. "But if you have respect of persons, you commit sin, and are convinced (or convicted) of the law as transgressors" (James 2:9).
 - (c) "Advantage" from **opheleias charin**. The false teachers were primarily concerned with their own popularity, their own financial condition. Peter referred to the same teachers. "And through covetousness shall they with

feigned words (well turned phrases) make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not....Having eyes full of adultery (literally 'full of adulteresses'), and that cannot cease from sin, beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children" (2 Peter 2:3, 14).

- (2) Both Peter and Jude give us some insight into the motivations of false teachers.
- (3) Are there preachers who would appeal to certain groups just to become more popular, or richer or to gain some other advantage?
- (4) The media sometimes gives the impression that all of us who preach are "Elmer Gantry."

G. Apostolic warnings (17-19).

1. "But, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles and of our Lord Jesus Christ" (17).
 - a. Please take note of the word "beloved" (**agapetoi**). It signifies the great respect, affection and love Jude had for those to whom he wrote. If we love our brothers and sisters in Christ, we are going to preach whatever they need – warning, urging, encouraging, convicting.
 - b. "Remember" (**mnesthete**) shows how so much of our preaching is reminding church members and others of what they already know.
 - (A) "I will therefore put you in remembrance,

though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not" (Jude 5).

- (B) "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though you know them, and be established in the present truth (that is, the truth that is present within you). Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance of these things" (2 Peter 1:12-13).
- c. Jude exalts "the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" as being the standard for the church's behavior. Their words are still the guidelines for the church's mission and work today.
- d. The apostles often warned of false teachers.
- (A) The Galatian letter
(B) Phil. 3:17-21
(C) Colossians
(D) 1 John 4:1
(E) 2 Peter 2.
(F) Do we think we can improve on apostolic preaching? If they warned about false teachers, how can we be faithful without doing the same?
2. "How they told you there should be mockers in the last time who should walk after their own ungodly lusts" (18).
- a. As anyone who is honest with the text can tell, the apostles did not belong to the "power of positive thinking" school. They believed warnings were proper and indispensable.
- b. "Mockers" from **empaiktes** from **empaizo**

- (verb) which means to play like a child (**pais**), to sport, to jest (Vine, p . 750).
- c. "The last time" (**eskatou chronou**) is similar to "the last days" (Acts 2:17) and "the last hour" (1 John 2:18). The expression refers to the entire Christian era—not to the final days of this dispensation.
 - d. The false teachers would "walk after their own ungodly lusts."
 - (A) They were constantly walking after their own ungodly lusts (Cf. 2 Peter 3:3).
 - (B) "Lusts" is the generic word for desires (**epithumia**).
 - (C) "Ungodly from **asebeion**, disrespectful, irreverent."
3. "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit" (19).
 - a. "Separate" from **apodiorizontes** (present active participle), boundary, to make a horizon. Our English word "horizon" is from the Greek **horizo**, to make a boundary. Martin Luther translated the word "makers of factions" (Woods, p. 403).
 - b. "Sensual" from **psychikoi**, natural (1 Cor. 2:14). Jude speaks of the corrupt desires and affections of the mind.
 - c. "Having not the Spirit."
 - (A) They were not following the directions of God's Holy Spirit. They probably claimed they had the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but they were either deceived or deceiving.
 - (B) How do we know the Holy Spirit's guidance in our day? Robert Tilton, Benny Hinn, Paul Crouch and others claim the direct leading of the Holy Spirit in their

ministries. How do we judge those ministries?

H. Exhortations to faithfulness (20-23).

1. "But you, beloved, building yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (20).
 - a. Again, notice Jude's use of the term "beloved" (**agapetoi**).
 - b. "Building" (**epoikodomountes**), from house (**oikos**) and means edifying, strengthening. Paul often uses this metaphor:
 - (A) "You are God's building" (**oikodome**) (1 Cor. 3:9).
 - (B) "Now if any man build (**epoikodomei**) upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble" (1 Cor. 3:12).
 - (C) Cf. Eph. 2:20; Col. 2:7.
 - c. "Your most holy faith."
 - (A) He is talking about building on the gospel message of salvation (Jude 3).
 - (B) "Holy" (**hagiotaten**) because it has come from God and leads men to be separated from the world.
 - (C) "Praying in the Holy Spirit." That is, by the way God's Spirit directs us to pray.
 - (D) Both "building up" and "praying" are present active participles and suggest continuous action: Constantly building ourselves up in the most holy faith and continually praying in the Holy Spirit.
2. "Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (21).
 - a. "Keep" from **tereo**, a first aorist active imperative. This word suggests the urgency of keeping oneself in the love of God.

- (A) Jude speaks of Christians' as being "preserved" (a form of the word **tereo** (**teteremenois**) (Jude 1).
- (B) The warning in verse 6 concerns "the angels who kept (**teresantas**) not their first estate."
- (C) James commands Christians to "keep themselves" (**terein**) unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
- (D) "Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). This verse shows both sides of the equation: Man's duty to obey God and God's care for men.
- b. "The love of God" can mean either God's love for man or man's love for God. Either would make good scriptural sense. Guy N. Woods: "While God provides the sphere of salvation—his love—it is man's function to keep himself, through faithfulness, in that sphere; and a failure to do so is to exclude one from the provisions of salvation" (**Peter, John and Jude**, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1979, p. 405).
- c. "Looking for" from **prosdechomai**, present middle participle, continuous action.
- (A) "Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).
- (B) "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved,

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that you look for such things, be diligent, that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3:12-14).

- d. "The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."
 - (A) God's mercy has already been shown by what Jesus Christ has already done for our salvation.
 - (B) Because of our sinful behavior we will always be in need of God's mercy.
 - (C) Eternal life could never be ours without the mercy of our Lord.
3. "And on some have compassion, making a difference" (22).
 - a. There are many different kinds of sinners in our world. Some are simply ignorant of God and His will. Some are rebellious because they do not like to have God interfering with their lives. Some do not believe in God or pretend they do not.
 - b. Our approach to different individuals must be different because they are different.
 - c. "Compassion" from *eleate*, mercy. Mercy does not suggest compromise but kindness, gentleness and understanding.
 - d. "Making a difference" is a very difficult expression. The American Revised Version translates it: "And on some have mercy, who are in doubt." Honest doubters may be easier to convert than most.
4. "And other save with fear, pulling them out

of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (23).

- a. Some people need a good jolt to make them see what Christ can do in their lives. Sometimes they are stubborn or angry and have to be pulled out of the fire.
- b. "Save with fear."
 - (A) Any and every legitimate means should be used to save the souls of men.
 - (B) We must fear lest we be drawn into ungodly behavior. We do not want to be more influenced by them than they are by us.
- c. Some have to be pulled out of the fire. We have seen this happen with firemen. They literally pull some people from burning buildings. "Pull" from **harpazo**, to snatch, caught up.
- d. We should hate even the garment which is spotted by sin. We cannot partake of their deeds in order to save them.

III. Benediction (24-25).

- A. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (24).
 1. "Able" from **dunameno** has the power. This is the same word used in Romans 1:16: "The gospel is God's power unto salvation."
 2. "Keep" from **phulasso**, to guard, to keep watch.
 3. "Falling" from **aptaistous**, to stumble. **Ptaio**, to stumble; **aptaio**, not to stumble.
 - a. If God is able to keep us from stumbling, why then do we stumble?
 - b. Men decide whether or not to seek God's help in their lives. If they do not obey His will, they are going to stumble.

- (A) "For in many things we all offend (stumble). If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (James 3:2).
- (B) "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things you shall never fall (*ptaisete*)" (2 Peter 1:10).
4. "And to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."
- a. "Present" from *katenopion*, in the very presence of. The word is often translated "before" and "signifies right over against, opposite" (Vine, p. 100).
 - b. "Faultless" means that we have been cleansed and forgiven by the sacrifice Christ made on our behalf. We are not faultless because we have achieved sinless perfection.
 - c. What great joy for us and for even the angels in heaven!
- B. "To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen" (25).
1. "The only wise God our Savior" refers to Jesus Christ. Jesus is God—not God the Father—but God the Son and He is our Savior.
 2. "Glory (*doxa*) and majesty (*megalosune*)." These are qualities which belong to deity alone.
 3. "Dominion" from *kratos*, power, might.
 4. "Power" from *exousias*, authority.
 5. The last part of this verse reads in the Greek: "Before all time, and now, and for evermore."
 6. God deserves the praise of men for all eternity.

Jude: An Addendum

I. Introduction.

- A. The book of Jude was the subject of an edition of the **Carolina Christian**, volume 35, number 9, September 1993. This publication comes out of Greenville, SC, and has been in publication for many years. David Pharr, director of the East Tennessee of Preaching and Missions, was editor of the **Carolina Christian** until recently. David had written some articles exposing the grievous error of Jim Woodroof's book, **The Church in Transition**. David Pharr was asked to resign as editor and Johnny Melton was appointed as a new editor.
- B. The journal has taken a different turn from the position it has occupied for many years. That is evident from the edition under consideration.

II. Discussion:

- A. "Re-Reading Jude" by Stanley N. Helton, Florence, SC.
 - 1. "The letter almost didn't make it to the canon" (p. 5).
 - a. Where did the idea that Jude almost did not make it to the canon originate?
 - b. The book was not widely used by the so-called "church fathers," but that was also true of James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 2 John and 3 John.
 - c. Is the book inspired? Is it a part of God's revelation to man? If these questions are to be answered affirmatively—and they must be—then God would not allow His word to be overlooked. "Being born again, not of

corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower thereof falls away: but the word of the Lord endures forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:23-25).

- d. The assertion that Jude "almost didn't make it to the canon" is not very faith building. It leaves some doubt about Jude's inspiration and authority.
2. "Earnestly contend for the faith."
 - a. Stanley N. Helton discusses the word "contend" (**epagonizomai**), as do Phil Stapp (pp. 9-10) and Ross Thompson (pp. 14-15).
 - (A) Helton says the word "contend" "was a metaphor common to athletic contests of the Greek games. The compound form of the word (**epi + agonizomai**) does not strengthen the meaning, as 'earnestly content' in the KJV suggests, but was equivalent to the uncompounded form with the same meaning (Bauckham, p. 31-32). The athletic metaphor, then, should not be pressed to justify aggression or combativeness in any form. Jude does not explain **how** one is to 'strive' for the faith, saving those instructions for the end" (p. 5).
 - (B) There are a great number of serious problems with Helton's statements, although I am not questioning his motives. He does seem to go a long way in "earnestly contending" against those who "earnestly contend."
 - (1) Helton says the word "contend" "was

a metaphor common to the athletic contests of the Greek games." Two examples demonstrate the appropriateness of that remark. "And every man that strives (**agonizomenos**) for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we are incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:25). Is there any doubt that Greek runners vigorously pursued their goal of winning? "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race (**agona**: the noun form of the verb **agonizomai**).

- (2) Helton denies that the compound form of the verb—**epi + agonizomai** has any special significance. It does not strengthen the meaning, as "earnestly contend" in the KJV suggests (p. 5).
 - (a) Just for the sake of argument, let us concede that he is right. Does that change the duty of gospel preachers and other Christians to defend the truth—both positively and negatively? We have the responsibility to be aggressive in declaring the gospel and in opposing all enemies of that truth.
 - (b) But the form Jude used is an intensified form and can correctly be translated "earnestly contend," or "vigorously contend,"

or "enthusiastically content" or some similar expression.

- (c) A. T. Robertson of the Baptist Seminary in Louisville was probably America's greatest contribution to New Testament Greek scholarship. He calls **epagonizesthai** a "late and rare compound, here only in the New Testament. A little additional (**epi**) striving to the already strong **agonizesthai** (**agon** contest" (**Word Pictures in the New Testament**, volume 6, p. 186).
- (d) Edwin A. Blum, "Jude," in **The Expositor's Bible Commentary**, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981). "To contend" or "struggle" translates **epagonizesthai**, a word that occurs only here in the NT. However related words do occur in the NT. The basic meaning of this word is that of the intense effort in a wrestling match. The verb form is a present infinitive, showing that the Christian struggle is to be continuous" (volume 12, p. 388). Whether or not one adds the word "earnestly" or its equivalent, the thought surely cannot be denied.
- (e) R. C. H. Lenski, **The Interpretation of 1 and 2 Peter, and Three Epistles of John and the Epistle of Jude**, Minneapolis: Augsburg

Publishing House, 1966). "We inject no thought of reluctance on Jude's part....Jude states it in a positive form: to keep earnestly contending (**epi** strengthens) for the faith, and not negatively: "against the heresies or heretics." The negative is implied, for one contends for something when there are antagonists (verse 4)" (p. 610).

- (f) Guy N. Woods, **Peter, John and Jude**, Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1979). "To 'contend earnestly' (**epagonizesthai**) is literally to wrestle, and as here figuratively used, denotes extreme efforts which are to characterize the faithful in their defense of the truth, however formidable and numerous its enemies may be" (p. 388).
- (g) W. E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, edited and updated by Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr., Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1984). "Epagnizomai signifies to contend about a thing, as a combatant (**epi**, upon or about, intensive, **agon**, a contest) to contend earnestly, Jude 3" (p. 225).
- (h) Why would Jude add **epi** to **agonizomai** if he meant nothing more than the word **agonizomai** conveys?

- (i) Besides, are not Christians to earnestly do whatever God requires of them?
 - (j) There are numerous words which convey the idea of vigor, enthusiasm, etc. For example, **kopiao** means laboring to the point of exhaustion, toiling. **Perisseuo** means to go beyond what is expected, to go above and beyond the call of duty. **Huperperisseuo** means to about exceedingly. How can Christians be faithful to their calling to preach the gospel and to defend the faith without doing do "earnestly?"
- (3) Helton correctly identifies the word "contend" with athletic contests, but then asserts that the metaphor "should not be pressed to justify aggression or combativeness in any form" (p. 5).
- (a) Would Helton consider Paul aggressive and combative in his dealings with the Galatian Judaizers? "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). "O foolish (**anoetoi**: stupid) Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth, crucified among you" (Gal. 3:1)?
 - (b) If by "aggression and combative-

ness" Helton means unkind, ugly, mean-spirited and derogatory, then that never is in order.

(4) What Jude meant by "earnestly contending" can be seen in the verse which follows: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Obviously, there is much more to contending for the faith, but who can doubt that Jude included the vigorous defence of the faith? Besides, there are other words which suggest an enthusiastic defense of the faith.

(a) **Dialegomai** in the King James is often translated "dispute" and is used often of Paul's debating in Jewish synagogues and elsewhere. "And he reasoned (**dialegomai**) in the synagogues every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (Acts 18:4). Paul carried on a debate with the Jews at Ephesus (**disputing: dialegomai**). The Jews rejected his message. He then went into the school of Tyrannus where he "disputed" for two years. "So that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:8-10).

(b) **Apologia** is translated "defense"

or “answer” and refers to a scientific defense of one’s beliefs. The Philippians had stood by Paul and supported him “in the defence (**apologia**) and confirmation of the gospel” (Phil. 1:7). “Knowing I am set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17). “My answer to them that do examine me is this” (1 Cor. 9:3). Other examples appear throughout the New Testament: Acts 22:1; 26:2. Is there something wrong with defending our beliefs against false teachers—whether brethren or not? I would be ashamed not to answer aggressively any charge against the gospel of Christ or against the church.

- (c) How could modern preachers find better models for their preaching and their defending the faith once delivered than Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the apostles, and the great Old Testament prophets? The Jews almost certainly would have described Jeremiah and Amos as “aggressive and combative.”
 - (d) What about soldiers? Are they aggressive and combative? Christians are compared to soldiers (2 Tim. 2:3-4).
- b. Helton affirms that Jude does not “at this point (Jude 3) explain **how** one is to ‘strive’ for the faith, saving those instructions for the end” (p. 5). As a matter of fact, he does show how one is to contend or strive for

the faith in verses four and following, including what he says at the end of the book. His whole book is devoted to “earnestly contending for the faith.” Striving, contending, fighting include pursuing the salvation of souls by a vigorous proclamation of the gospel and by an intense defense of the faith against all false teachers – both in the church and out.

- c. Helton asks whether or not the word “contending” should be used “in an attempt to justify slanderous and libelous name-calling.”
- (A) “Slanderous and libelous name-calling” is always wrong – regardless of the speaker’s intent.
- (B) But is all name-calling “slanderous and libelous?”
- (1) Paul spoke of some who have made shipwreck of the faith, “of whom are Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:19-20). Was Paul guilty of slander and libel?
- (2) “Demas has forsaken us, having loved this present word” (2 Tim. 4:10). Demas had been a faithful brother, but had deserted the Lord’s cause. Was Paul slandering and libeling this former faithful brother?
- (C) When I show from Rubel Shelley’s books that he teaches salvation by grace only, am I slandering and libeling Shelley? I would be if he does not teach this false doctrine.
- (D) When I show – as I have on many

occasions – that Jim Woodroof ridicules churches of Christ and casts doubts on the value of all the New Testament books, am I slandering and libeling Jim.

d. Helton says “it is sad irony that some would run the risk of promoting the alienation of brothers and sisters by ‘contending’ in such a way as to draw lines and choose sides (which, by the way, was the strategy of the intruders” (verse 19)!

(A) Surely, very few people among the churches of Christ or elsewhere want to alienate people. But Christ probably alienated more people than any other teacher who ever lived. Does anyone imagine the Pharisees were pleased when our Lord referred to them as hypocrites (Mt. 23)? Were the Sadducees happy when Christ told them they did not know the scripture nor the power of God (Mt. 22:29)? Did not Paul alienate some of the Galatians because of his compromising proclamation of the gospel (Gal. 4:16)? Do we think we can preach faithfully on every Biblical subject and not alienate some people—including some of our own brothers and sisters?

(B) Are there never times to “draw lines and choose sides?”

(1) Joshua drew lines and chose sides (Josh. 24:15).

(2) When a brother teaches that Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are in some way better than the rest of the New Testament – as Jim Woodroof unquestionably does – drawing lines and

- choosing sides are in order. In fact, Bible-believing and Bible-honoring Christians have no alternative.
- (3) Drawing lines and choosing sides without just cause will bring the wrath of God on the heads of those who are guilty, but there are times when we have a sacred obligation to draw lines and choose sides. Were the early Christians justified in drawing lines and choosing sides on Judaizers and Gnostics and other false teachers? Could they have done otherwise and expect the Lord's blessings?
- e. Helton says the phrase "contend for the faith" is "often lifted out of context and forced into service without asking Jude, who coined the phrase in the first place, what he meant by it" (p. 6).
- (A) In the first place, no one knows that Jude coined the phrase, "contend for the faith." What part did the Holy Spirit play in the selection of the words Jude used? James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, **The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources**, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1930). These distinguished Greek scholars give an example of the word's use as far back as 36-35 B.C. (p. 227).
- (B) How have gospel preachers lifted the expression, "contend for the faith," out of context? If it includes both the positive proclamation of the gospel and a defense

of the faith—as it clearly does in Jude and in many other New Testament passages—how can we be accused of taking the expression out of context?

- (1) No honest student of God's book wants to take any word or expression out of context, but the use of this verse to encourage a strong confrontation with false teachers is not taking it out of context.
 - (2) Like Peter (2 Peter 2), Jude wanted the early Christians and us to know the motivations of false teachers and the grave dangers to the church they constituted. That is how gospel preachers have used this verse all of my life. I have heard men like Foy E. Wallace, Jr., N. B. Hardeman and G. C. Brewer speak on this passage and make the same application Jude makes.
- f. Helton says that Jude specifically and probably exclusively had in mind by using the term, "contend for the faith" the positive teaching of the gospel. "He tells us in specific terms in verses 20-22)" (p. 6).
- (A) "Contending for the faith" unquestionably includes "building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" and keeping ourselves in the love of God (Jude 20-21). It also includes doing all within our power to cooperate with God in the saving of the lost (Jude 22-23).
 - (B) But the major thrust of Jude (like 2 Peter 2) is to warn of the grave threat the false teachers were to the church. Preaching

without defending will endanger all Christians; defending without preaching the truth will be useless. If we want to know the right balance, we must give attention to the preaching of Christ and of His apostles. Following Robert Schuller or Norman Vincent Peale will not produce faithful preachers or strong churches. Nowhere in God's book is there any justification for "user friendly churches" or mediating preachers.

- g. The following statement is beyond belief. "When things are as bad in our day as they were for Jude and the churches of his time, only God can take care of it, anyway" (p. 6).
- (A) How does God take care of apostate churches and individuals?
 - (B) Does he not use his preachers and his elders to take care of indifferent, immoral, and destructive heresies and heretics? Why did John write: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). The word "try" comes from the Greek **dokimazo** and means to examine with a view to approving or disapproving.
 - (C) God gives His church the responsibility of teaching the truth and of exposing all the errors which will condemn men's souls to eternal torment.
 - (D) How can anyone read Jude 3 and reach any other conclusion, unless one has already made up his mind what Jude ought to say on the matter of contending for the faith?

- B. "Contend for the Faith" by Phil Stapp (pp. 9-10).
1. Phil Stapp says the word "contend" carries a meaning of struggle or fight. "It was used in reference to athletic contests, especially wrestling" (p. 9).
 - a. There is no doubt that the Greek **epagonizomai** involves struggle, striving, fighting. "Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12). "I have fought a good fight" (2 Tim. 4:7). These words—fight and fought—are all from the Greek **agona** and **agonimai**. Who can doubt the struggle Paul has in mind?
 - b. "Wrestling" may have been in Jude's mind and also in Paul's mind when they used these words. But does any wrestler think he can win simply by having good moves—positive moves? Will he not have to ward off his opponent? Is the negative not necessarily implied in the Greek?
 - c. Jude makes it very plain what we are to fight **for** and what we are to fight **against**. So do Paul, Peter and John and the Lord Jesus Christ—any part of it—without vigorously opposing Calvinism, the New Age movement, the so-called "great Religions of the word" and all other false ways? Can we afford not to hate the deeds of false teachers when God has said He hates every false way?
 - d. Fighting for the faith is not adequate; we must also fight against all error. Incidentally, that is precisely what the men who wrote articles for the **Carolina Christian** have done. They are attempting to oppose what churches of Christ have done in preaching against false

- doctrines. They are like the positive preachers who condemn negative preachers: "You should not be negative."
- C. Paul Jarrett, "First-Century Apostates" (pp. 12-13).
1. Jarrett thinks we ought to examine the direction of one's life and not specific doctrines and conduct to determine if he is an apostate.
 - a. Specific doctrines and conduct determine the direction of one's life. For example, if a preacher denies the essentiality of being in the church, that will determine the direction of his life. If he engages in homosexuality, that conduct will determine the direction of his life, regardless of his pretensions to the contrary.
 - b. The direction of one's life is not a generic goodness or a good attitude. It depends on what one believes and what he does.
 2. Jarrett says that "godliness is more a matter of possessing a 'God-ward attitude' than of having attained certain prescribed attributes" (p. 13)
 - a. Godliness is what God says it is—not what we may want it to be.
 - b. Godliness certainly includes a "God-ward attitude," but what constitutes a "God-ward attitude?" Bible doctrines and godly behavior determine one's "God-ward attitude." How can we have a "God-ward attitude" and not comply with the specific commands of God?
 - c. Righteousness is what one does (Acts 10:34-35) and not just what one is.
- D. "Contending for the Faith" by Ross Thomson (pp. 14-15). This article is one of the most disturbing and unscriptural ones I have read in a long time.
1. Thomson begins his articles with this quotation from Harry Emerson Fosdick, one of the rankest

modernists of our century and a strong enemy of biblical revelation, as is evidence by his book, **The Modern Use of the Bible**, the Yale Lectures for 1924. "We defend religion too much. Vital religion, like good music, needs no defense, but rendition. A wrangling controversy in support of religion is precisely as if the members of the orchestra should beat folks over the head with their violins to prove that the music is beautiful" (p. 14). There is so much wrong with this quotation that it makes one wonder where Ross Thomson's loyalties lie.

- a. Harry Emerson Fosdick carried on a long bitter controversy with J. Gresham Machen. Dr. Machen completely destroyed Dr. Fosdick's modernism. No wonder Fosdick would rather avoid controversy! And where we stand today without the stinging defense of the faith by men like Machen?
- b. Frankly, I am not going to stand by and watch men like Fosdick attempt to destroy New Testament Christianity. How can we do it when Peter commanded us to give an answer (**apologia**) to everyone who asks concerning our faith (1 Peter 3:15)?
- c. "Wrangling controversies" are never pleasant to God's faithful children, but they are unavoidable in many cases.
 - (A) Jesus was the greatest controversialist who ever lived. Do we think we can improve on His message and methods?
 - (B) Paul engaged in controversy. How could he not have done so when all kinds of evil and false doctrines were being promoted—even by members of the church?
 - (C) Neither Jesus Christ nor Paul relished

- controversy, but they had no alternative in view of the evils of their day.
- d. Fosdick's example does not serve the cause of Christ very well. Orchestra leaders must work to eliminate any grating sounds. If he does not, there will be no beautiful music—only noise. Gospel preachers must work to eliminate all discordant notes in the body of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, there will not be the unity in the body which God demands. What was Paul doing in Corinth when he condemned division (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:1-3)?
 - e. To say that religion needs no defense is to ignore what Christ and the apostles did or to say they went about the work of God in the wrong way. I cannot believe anyone would prefer Harry Emerson Fosdick over Jesus Christ and the apostles.
2. "What a pleasure to fight and to feel holy at the same time! What a pleasure to thrash the daylights out of someone—and to do it in the name of Jesus! Why it even beats a good barroom brawl for rollicking good fun" (p. 14).
- a. Did Jesus engage in fighting error and immorality and "feel holy at the same time?" He certainly fought error (Matt. 5-7) and vigorously condemned immorality (Matt. 15:18-20).
 - b. Are there people who "thrash the daylights out of someone" and do it in the name of Jesus.
 - (A) That really is not the question. Can we oppose religious error and do it in the name of Jesus?
 - (B) I am not asking if everyone who defends

the faith has the right attitude. But is it possible to defend the faith and have the right attitude? Jesus Christ, Paul, Peter, John and Jude “earnestly contended for the faith” with the right attitude. Can we not follow their example? Is it inherently wrong to fight against evil and false teachings?

(C) The men who produced the **Carolina Christian** apparently think you can “thrash the daylights out of someone” and feel holy about it.

3. If quoting with approval one of the worst modernists of our country were not sufficient, Ross Thomson quotes with approval one of the most blatant atheists of all time – Bertrand Russell. Russell hated New Testament Christianity and did all within his power to destroy it. Why would anyone use the words of Russell to try to justify his opposition to defending the faith? “Few people can be happy unless they hate some other person, nation, or creed”
 - a. If I preach against Shirley MacLaine and the New Age Movement – and I do and plan to keep on doing so – does that prove I hate Shirley MacLaine?
 - b. Did Paul hate Demas when he pointed out Demas’ desertion from the faith? Did Jesus hate the Pharisees when He called them hypocrites (Mt. 23)? Has Ross Thomson forgotten how Jesus concluded His opposition to the Pharisees (Mt. 23:37)? Did Jude, Peter and John hate false teachers when they warned the early church about them? They hated the deeds of the false teachers, but they did not hate the men. They wanted all

- men—including false teachers—to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- c. If I know my own heart, I do not hate anyone, but I intend to keep on opposing Calvinism, the New Age movement, the men in the church who would change the church to a denomination. I have spoken against Jim Woodrof's book, **The Book of Transition**, Rubel Shelley's book, **The Second Incarnation**, and Bill Love's book, **The Core Gospel**. But anyone who accuses me of hating these men must give an account to God for his unprincipled and unjustified judgment.
4. "People love to be superior to others and nothing fulfills that desire more effectively than a good battle with an enemy. In discrediting and demeaning an opponent (real or imagined) I elevate myself. If a doctrinal question can be made the pretext, then so much the better. I can now do it all in the name of the Lord, and forget that his attitude is intrinsically at odds with the gospel" (p. 14).
- a. Our brother is not only a critic of churches of Christ; he is also a psychologist. How many of us long to be superior to others? How did he determine that? How did he decide that doing battle with any enemy is an effective way of feeling superior? Are there gospel preachers who fall into that category? Probably, but does that mean that all who warn of false teachers belong to that class? Pretty negative about gospel preachers, would you not say? I wonder if Ross Thomson feels superior to the gospel preachers he is condemning? Is he not doing battle with enemies in the church—at least, enemies as he sees them?

- b. Are gospel preachers attempting to elevate themselves when they oppose Calvinism, Hinduism, Buddhism, homosexuality, abortion, gambling, etc.? Does Ross Thomson preach against any of these evils? If he does not, how can he call himself a gospel preacher?
 - c. Thomson could not be more wrong than when he says that gospel preachers who engage in battles against evil “forget that this attitude is intrinsically at odds with the gospel?”
 - (A) Paul asked the Romans, “You therefore who teach another, do you teach yourself? You who preach a man should not steal, do not steal” (Rom. 2:21).
 - (B) Ross Thomson needs to be asked, “You who condemn others for doing battle against an enemy, do you do battle against those you consider to be enemies?” How could anyone be more inconsistent than Ross Thomson?
 - (C) If the attitude of doing battle with moral and spiritual enemies of the cross “is intrinsically at odds with the gospel,” then Jesus Himself and all His apostles were “intrinsically at odds with the gospel.”
5. “Pugnacious, combative people do little to confirm the message that God is love, or to inspire others to humbly carry a cross” (p. 14).
- a. Are gospel preachers necessarily pugnacious when they preach against modernism, liberalism, and immorality? They certainly may be pugnacious, but are they always pugnacious when they preach against the enemies of the cross? Is Ross Thomson

- pugnacious when he condemns a pugnacious attitude among gospel preachers?
- c. Combativeness would be a good word to describe Jesus and His confrontation with the Pharisees and with the Sadducees. It would also be a good word in Paul's approach to the false teachers among the Galatian churches. And what about Jude's opposition to the teachers he had in mind? Peter was combative in his exposure of the false teachers he faced, but he was not pugnacious (2 Peter 2).
 - d. The truth of the matter is that no gospel preacher can show the love of Almighty God when he does not warn of the consequences of following false doctrine.
 - (A) Sometimes that warning must be in a stern, explicit manner, as when Paul dealt with the Judaizers at Galatia and Peter reproached the false teachers in 2 Peter 2.
 - (B) Always gospel preachers and other teachers must make every effort to prevent anyone's being lost. So-called "positive preaching" will not stem the tide of liberalism and digression.
 - (C) The time has come when faithful churches and faithful preachers must unite their voices to stem the tide of apostasy from the truth of God's word.
6. "The difficulty we face is to oppose error without becoming like the enemy" (p. 15).
- a. That is unquestionably a real danger which most gospel preachers have understood all their lives. We must understand that we cannot use unchristian methods in opposing and exposing unchristian methods and messages.

- b. But must one become like the enemy in combatting the enemy? At West Fayetteville, I am in the midst of a series of sermons on "Satan, Satanism and Demonology." Do I have to become like Satan in condemning Satan, and Satanism?
 - c. You almost certainly have heard the older preachers say that we cannot preach the gospel of Christ in the spirit of the devil.
 - d. When we inform false teachers that they are going to be lost if they persist in their ways, we must not act as if we are thrilled because of that.
7. "Jude is not angry over some abstract principle, or question of procedure, or matter of opinion. He does not rail out of personal rancor. He is angry because the whole attitude people and the whole intellectual thrust of their position is at odds with the cross" (p. 15).
- a. Whether or not that observation is correct depends on how one defines "abstract principle." Jude was strongly condemning men he calls "filthy dreamers" — men who "defile the flesh, despise dominion (or authority) and speak evil of dignities" (Jude 8).
 - b. He was also speaking against those who claim to have inside information but did not (Jude 10), against those who had followed the way of Cain and "greedily run after the error of Balaam" (Jude 11).
8. "We must as Christians oppose all error; but we do not battle the way the world does. It is vitally important that we use Jesus' strategy" (p. 15).
- a. Ross Thomson is right when he says Christians must oppose all error. The

general tenor of his article, however, leaves a different impression.

- b. He is also right when he says we must not do battle the way the world does. We cannot be unkind, dishonest and mean just to win a battle in the fight against error.
- c. If we would follow the "Jesus strategy," we would be in good company. That is what I am begging gospel preachers and all Christians to do. If we had been following Jesus and His inspired teachers, we would not be faced today with the demand to change so many of the fundamentals of the faith, such as, the new hermeneutic. Because many of us have been more concerned about increasing in numbers and in contribution, we have neglected to preach the whole counsel of God.
- d. The time has come for simple, straight forward, sound, sensible preaching of the gospel.
- e. Feeding pabulum from the pulpit and in our Bible classes will not build strong churches and will not prevent the encroachment of sectarianism on the church.

Living For Jesus: Questions For Jude

Introduction

- 1 What is the purpose of the book of Jude?
- 2 Who seems to be the author of the book?
- 3 To whom does Jude address the epistle?
- 4 Discuss the relationship of Jude and 2 Peter.

The Text:

- 1 Jude calls himself "a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James." Discuss.
- 2 What is the meaning of the word "sanctified?"
- 3 Define the expression, "common salvation."
- 4 What is the significance of "the faith once delivered to the saints?"
- 5 What does "contend earnestly" mean?
- 6 Some of the false teachers turned "the grace of God into lasciviousness." What does that mean?
- 7 Explain the meaning of "crept in unawares."
- 8 Why did God punish His own people?
- 9 What happened to the angels "who kept not their first estate, but left their habitation?"
- 10 Discuss what happened to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 11 In this context, what is the meaning of "fornication?"
- 12 What did Jude mean by "strange flesh?"
- 13 What was the "way of Cain?"
- 14 Explain "the error of Balaam."
- 15 Who was Korah and what did he do that was so evil?
- 16 What is the meaning of "clouds without water?" How valuable are they?
- 17 What was the prophecy of Enoch?
- 18 The false teachers "were murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts." Discuss.
- 19 What were the apostolic warnings Jude had in mind?
- 20 If Christians cannot fall from grace, why did Jude urge his readers to build "themselves up in the most high faith?"

- 21 Explain: "Pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."
- 22 Do you think of Jude as a negative approach to Christianity?