In this chapter Peter addresses the practical application of holiness and sanctification in the relationship between a husband and wife. He will also reveal to us the nature of suffering using Jesus Christ as the ultimate example. This passage provides a source for pre-marital counseling!

The chapter concludes with a discussion regarding the importance of unity within the church.

Vv. 1-2 ➢ Responsibilities of Wives for a Healthy Marriage

[1 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

[Wives, likewise....] Peter now addresses the responsibilities of Christian wives by using the term “likewise”; which in the Greek [homoioos] means “similarly”.

Note that by doing so, Peter is not comparing wives being the same as “servants” in 1 Pet. 2:18 because he also uses the same term [likewise] when addressing the husbands in v.7.

His usage of the term “likewise” is pointing back to the “dynamics” of submission to governmental laws {vv.13-14} and between servants [e.g., employees] and masters [e.g., employers] {v.18} of the last chapter.

His use of the word “likewise” is also emphasizing the God ordained moral order/working of things.

Before we tackle the admonition of wives being submissive to their husbands, and what that looks like in practice, it will be worthwhile to call attention to the fact that there is “sameness” within “differences”—men and women are simultaneously “equal” and “different”.

When it comes to a Biblical understanding of wives being submissive to their husbands; the terms “equal” and “different” are not mutually exclusive.

Men and women are obviously physiologically different, and that for the purpose of pro-creation, but they are both equally required for this to happen! So they are equally important physically.

This truth is even more important for a Christian to understand and emphasize in today’s culture of ‘gender confusion’, ‘identity disorientation’ and “gender fluidity”. That what gender you think you are somehow makes it “true”.

Sadly, because people have dismissed the Biblical account of the creation of man and woman as myth, many now believe and teach that gender is an “assigned” condition rather than an actual physical reality¹. This is being psychologically imposed upon our unsuspecting youth; which is simply another example of man’s rebellion against God’s moral standards!

The concept of “assigned gender” is a perversion of the clear teaching of scripture:

“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them....He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created”; Gen. 1:27; 5:2. See also Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6

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¹ The psychological term invented to describe this is Gender Dysphoria, or Gender Identity Disorder (GID); which describes the distress a person experiences as a result of the sex and gender they were “assigned” at birth. In these cases, the “assigned” sex and gender do not match the person’s gender “identity”, and the person is considered “transgender”.

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In the marriage relationship husband and wife would actually become “one flesh”! Refer to Gen. 2:19-24.

Note also that woman was not made from either a bone from the head [to rule over him] or foot [to be trampled on] of a man, but “cloned” from his rib2—the side or LEVEL OF EQUALITY.

Using the Hebrew words, Gen. 2:23 reads, “She shall be called ISHA, because she was taken out of ISH.”

In Gen. 2:18 she is referred to as “.....a helper comparable to him”—that is, A HELPER THAT WAS HIS COUNTERPART. The entire verse reads, “And the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him’.”

God made woman to be man’s counterpart and his companion to share life with; not as someone who was to be physically and verbally abused and manipulated into serving him.

She is there to help him. She is there to be a part of him. She is there to love him. She is there to complete him. And he is there to love and protect her. That is the ideal relationship in marriage.

Human experience shows that ignoring the God-created distinctions between male and female in society will lead to much grief and heartache and, in the context, misery in a marriage!

There are also psychological differences, emotional and mental, between men and women. But they are both spiritual beings equally needing forgiveness of their sin and guilt through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their concerns, motivations and drives are equally important.

Despite all the “talk” about “equality”, no one can seriously disagree with the statement that men and women think differently. And this actually has its basis in physiology; in the way that God created them. For example, men have the hormone testosterone and women have estrogen.

And for husbands to understand this truth cannot be overstated; as we shall soon see {v.7}. We are going to learn that there is a very practical aspect of acknowledging the created distinction between men and women.

It is undeniable that men and women are different physically and emotionally. We know this medically but also, more importantly, Biblically as well!

God is willing to use a woman to advance His purpose and there are several examples of this in the Old and New Testament:

- Deborah—she was a judge in Israel {Judges 4, 5}
- Ruth—a Moabitess, the great-grandmother of King David & in the line of the Messiah {Ruth 1:16-17; 4:13-21}
- Esther—queen of Persia who helped save her people from destruction {Esther 2:7; 9:23-32}
- Mary—the young virgin chosen to be the mother of Jesus {Luke 1:26-33}
- Mary Magdalene—followed Jesus with His disciples; one of the few disciples that stood by the cross, first to see the resurrected Jesus and testified of this fact to the disciples {Luke 8:1-2; Mark 16:9-11; John 20:1-2}
- Joanna & Susanna—followed Jesus with His disciples and provided for His needs from their own substance {Luke 8:3; 24:10}
- Lydia—one of the first converts in Macedonia, provided for the needs of Paul and Silas {Acts 16:11-15, 38-40}

2 It is interesting to note that science agrees with this order. Men have XY chromosomes, but woman have XX chromosomes. God took the X chromosome from man, added another and made woman from the man! Also note: the bone that God chose was close to the heart, thus making a “heart-mate”.

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Their God-given respective roles of men and women are different but they are both equal in importance!

[…..be submissive to your own husbands,] As was mentioned in the notes of the last chapter, the Greek word rendered “submissive” here is a military term³ which literally means “to arrange under”; i.e., in an orderly manner. Thus, the word is not referring to an inferior position or unequal status but is stressing a sense of order and purpose.

In his commentary, J. Vernon McGee emphasizes that a wife’s submission should be the voluntary and a natural response to her husband’s love and protection.

In chapter 2 we also learned that the ultimate example of submission was our wonderful Savior, Jesus Christ, Himself! Through His submission to the Father [“not My will but Yours be done”; Luke 22:42] Jesus proved Himself not only to be humble but also imminently influential. He did not need to “prove” Himself:

Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.—Phil. 2:5-8

And because of that submission

God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2:9-11

Wow! Because of His humble submission and obedience, one day every person will bow their knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord—to the glory of the Father!

Through Jesus’ submission and sacrificial death on the cross He obtained our salvation, the forgiveness of sin and the erasure of our guilt. He thus became the Author of the Gospel and the Finisher of our Faith {Heb. 12:2}!

So we need to get it straight that the idea of “submission” does not mean making oneself insignificant or taking on a substandard role. Not when our mighty God is involved!

Thus, it should be noted that Peter is not saying that a wife should be a “door mat”; placed in an inferior position⁴. Instead, each set of his exhortations, one set to wives and one set to husbands {v.7} are a matter of order and purpose.

Perhaps an illustration will help: An American football team is made up of twenty-two individuals playing at different positions; sub-divided into an “offensive” team of eleven players [primary goal is to score points] and “defensive” team of eleven players [primary goal is to keep the other team from scoring points]. Offensively they are all under the authority of the captain of the team—usually the quarter-back; the one who controls the ball after it’s “hiked” to him.

³ An example of this is in Luke 7:8 where the Roman centurion says to Jesus: “For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go’, and he goes; and to another, ‘Come’, and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this’, and he does it.”

⁴ The Gospel actually liberates women and in Christ Jesus they are co-equal heirs with men of eternal life. The Gospel message allows men and women to openly mingle or share authority; e.g., Acts 16:14-15; 2 Tim. 1:5).
Does that mean his position is more important or superior to the other players? Of course not! Matter-of-fact, many of the other players on the team may be stronger and perhaps even more athletic or intelligent than the quarter-back. Some must block players trying to tackle the quarter-back while others run with or catch the ball trying to elude tacklers trying to keep them from scoring points. But there can be only one “leader” and the RULES of the game specify that is the quarter-back who calls the plays. But in order to have the best chance of winning the game each player must put himself under the authority of, “arrange himself under”, the quarter-back on each play. Each player must then faithfully perform his assigned responsibility to the best of his ability. The entire team, working together as one, is necessary to winning the game and just one bad “play” could lose the game. The team’s “submission” to the leadership of the quarter-back is essential to successfully executing each play so that, step-by-step, the game is won.

So too, although different in physiological and psychological make-up, husbands and wives are equally important to a successful marriage. But there is an order and God has designated the husband as the leader in this. And each spouse, meeting the NEEDS of the other, makes for a happy and healthy marriage. When we get to v.7 we’ll look at these NEEDS specifically.

A Biblical reference will further help to illustrate “arrange under”. When Ruth was gleaning grain in the fields belonging to Boaz he commended her and said:

The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.—Ruth 2:12

First, Ruth, who was a Moabitess, was putting herself under the authority of the LORD [Yahweh] God of Israel. Secondly, her attitude towards Boaz indicates she was also putting herself under the authority of Boaz—her benefactor and protector; who eventually become her husband!

Her submission to Boaz not only made her the great-grandmother of King David, but also earned her a place in the lineage of the Messiah—Jesus Christ! Refer to Matt. 1:5.

Peter’s exhortation for wives to be submissive to their husbands is based on a sense of order—consistent with the fact that everywhere we look in nature we can see that the LORD is a God of ORDER.

Therefore, the basis of Peter’s exhortation IS NOT one of an inferior position, or one of inequality because the Bible specifies that a wife is to be a “help-mate comparable” to the husband {Gen. 2:18}; equal in stature, but different in role.

God has designed and arranged marriage relationships based on the physiological and psychological differences between men and women as He created them. The Father knows best what is good for a marriage to be holy and healthy.

In a “post-fallen” world, God’s plan for the marriage relationship, HEADSHIP has been given to the husband. Refer to Gen. 3:16.

So Peter reminds us that there can only be one “leader” in this relationship.

[…..that even if some do not obey the word] That is, their husbands who are disobedient to the “word”. There are two ways to interpret who Peter is referring to:

5 A woman from the nation of Moab and therefore a non-Jew who would have been “looked-down” upon. The Moabites were descendents of the incestuous relationship initiated by Lot’s eldest daughter {Gen. 19:30-37} which produced a son named “Moab”. 
(1) A *believing* husband but one who is disobeying God’s word and not living in a Christian manner.

(2) An *unbelieving* husband; one who is **NOT** a Christian.

However, I don’t believe that Peter was leaving the reference up for interpretation of his readers and he gives us definite clues which help us discover that the **SECOND** meaning is the one he intended.

Peter is here referring to an *unbelieving* husband. Let’s do a little “Bible study”....... Notice the very next part of the verse has the phrase, “may be won by”, literally “gained”, implying the husband is not a believer. He has not been “won over” by the Gospel.

In the next chapter (4:17) Peter says⁶, “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

So the “obedience” has to do with not believing the Word of God—specifically, the Gospel of the LORD, Jesus Christ. By not believing it, a person remains “unsaved” and has not yet been “gained” or “won over”.

Since God’s word teaches us that a Christian should not marry a non-believer; which the scriptures refer to as being “unequally yoked” (2 Cor. 6:14); the situation that Peter is referring to here is probably one where both the husband and wife were *unbelievers* when they were married and the wife became a believer afterward. [This can also be reversed where the husband becomes a believer after the marriage ceremony].

Perhaps an example from J. Vernon McGee commentary may also help to illustrate the point that Peter is making. He recounts one counseling session:

One young lady came to me and said, “Dr. McGee, my fiancé is not a believer, but I am going to win him for the Lord.” I said to her, “Have you won him yet?” “No,” she said, “he won’t even come to church with me yet.” So I told her this: “Your greatest influence with that young man is right now. The day you get married, your influence to win him for the Lord will greatly diminish. You'll never be able to preach to him again. You're going to be living with him, and he's going to be watching you very carefully from now on. If you can't get him to church now, you're in trouble.” She didn't like what I said. In fact, she went and got another preacher to perform the ceremony because I would not perform it. I do not marry—and have never knowingly married—a *saved* and an *unsaved* person; I believe that is entirely wrong. She got someone else to marry them, but she came back in two years weeping and wanting to talk to me because she had gotten a divorce from him. That marriage was headed in that direction even before it started, my friend.

This is important to note because of the practical implication of Peter’s next admonition—unbelieving husbands are to be won over **NOT** by verbal arguments but by the **loving** and **faithful testimony** of the, now, believing wife.

It should also be noted that an *unbelieving* husband is “sanctified” by the believing wife; and vice-versa (1 Cor. 7:14).

But it should also be noted in this context that, in the unfortunate situation where the unbelieving husband [or wife] wants a divorce, the believing wife [or husband] is under no obligation to force him [her] to stay:

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⁶ Note that the apostle Paul also uses the same expression, “those who do not obey the Gospel”, in 2 Thess. 1:8.
But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

—1 Cor. 7:15-16

However, unless there is physical and/or verbal abuse, a Christian wife is obligated to remain married and not seek a divorce. This applies to the situation where the husband is a believer, but the wife is not, as well (see 1 Cor. 7:10-13).

However, unless there is physical and/or verbal abuse, a Christian wife is obligated to remain married and not seek a divorce. This applies to the situation where the husband is a believer, but the wife is not, as well (see 1 Cor. 7:10-13).

[…..they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives] In other words, Christian wives are to conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner if they want to win their husbands to the LORD and see them saved. They are not first-and-foremost to become “preachers” in the home. Verbal arguments alone are not going to convince him and are not encouraged.

Submission is a voluntary step; it is not a command. The believing wife is to continue nurturing their relationship by voluntarily deferring to, letting her husband—though unsaved—continue to be the head of the home.

But how far should a Christian wife go in her submission to him? We’ll deal with that question when we get to v.6.

So how does a believing wife win an unbelieving husband to obey the Gospel?

Well, Peter gives us the answer in the next part of this verse—she needs to first-of-all continue living a life in submission to God’s moral standards. Her Christian witness and testimony is at stake and becomes a “book” that her husband will read.

[…..when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.] The Greek word rendered “observe” means “to inspect” [which only Peter uses here and in 1 Pet. 2:12] and “chaste” literally means “clean” and in this usage refers to being “pure, set apart”. [The word is derived from the same Greek word rendered “holy”].

The apostle Paul uses this word to describe the Church; “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” [2 Cor. 11:2].

Above all, for the wife, winning an unbelieving husband to the LORD means living a clean/pure/virtuous and humble life; respectful of their unbelieving husband and providing a testimony and witness of the genuineness of their faith.

This is all to done with an attitude of reverence [Gk. “phobos”] for God; the One Who has ordained the marriage relationship {Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:5-6; Mark 10:6-7}.

Sadly, this is why so many secular [and even “Christian”] marriages fail—there is no reverence, no respect, for God’s moral standards.

In the next few verses Peter describes what the “chaste conduct” consists of.
v. 3-6 ➢ **THE WIFE’S ADORNMENT: SUPERFICIAL VS. SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION**

[3 Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—4 rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.]

[Do not let your adornment be merely outward.....] The word “adornment” is added here to make this passage clearer [it’s not in the original Greek]. The verse literally reads; “Let it not be the outward”; so the context is concern with external appearance. What follows is what that is.

Is Peter admonishing wives to NOT to make themselves look outwardly attractive? Or to have any concern with the way they look?

Not at all! We need to note that Peter is NOT saying that wives should present themselves in an unattractive, so-called “frumpy”, manner; or take no interest in the way they look. When we understand the cultural setting [similar today] in which Peter wrote these words it becomes clear exactly what his concern was.

It all has to do with HOW a wife “represents” herself before God, her husband and the rest of society. It really goes back to displaying chaste conduct {v.2}, representing an ATTITUDE of humility, purity, innocence and modesty. For a description of such a wife see Proverbs 31.

As we shall see, Peter is speaking about an ATTITUDE of the heart that puts the emphasis on vanity and costliness; while at the same time ignoring inner qualities of beauty and character. He’s talking about a style of fashion that can either convey worldliness or a convey serious desire for holiness. It is all about the wife’s genuine Christian testimony.

[.....arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine (lit. “worldly”) apparel] Three categories of items are mentioned here: (1) hair styles, (2) gold jewelry and (3) clothing.

Is Peter saying that a woman should never braid her hair or wear gold jewelry? Certainly not! For if he were, note this carefully, in this context he would also be saying that a woman should never wear any clothes! No there is something more here than just “meets-the-eye”.

Indeed, there is more to it than just that—we need to understand the historical context [which was not unlike our own] and the meaning behind what and who Peter is referring to here.

The word “arranging” renders a Greek word meaning “elaborate braiding”. Thus, the KJV renders this, “plaiting”. So this is talking about elaborate hairstyles that are costly and time-consuming to create.

In this context, “wearing gold” refers to being bedecked with an excessive amount of gold jewelry. It also may have included incorporating gold in ones hairstyle; as the Roman and Greek women commonly did. They were going “over-the-top” in wearing gold.

Note that Peter is referring to a particular kind of apparel—“worldly” clothing because the adjective [“fine”] that Peter uses to modify “apparel” is the Greek word “kosmos”, which refers to the “organized worldly system”\(^7\). It is the opposite of “chaos”; total disorder and randomness.

\(^7\) It is interesting to note that the English word “cosmetic” is derived from the Greek word “kosmos”.
And since everyone needs to wear some form of clothing, Peter’s distinction is probably referring to a specific aspect of *worldliness*, in context one that elevates one’s *status* [wealth and position]. Some also see here the aspect of *gratuitous sexuality*.

Why is this important? Because we are told:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.—*1 John 2:15-17*

So “*worldly clothing*” speaks of wearing clothing to gratify (a) the *desire of the flesh*, (b) the *desire of the eyes* and (c) the *pride of life*—i.e., status, prestige, power and intellect.

As we shall see in v.7, this is what got Eve into trouble with Satan in the first place!

Is it a sin for a woman to braid their hair in an elaborate fashion? No! Is it a sin for a woman to wear attractive gold jewelry? No! Is it a sin for a woman to be attractively dressed? No!

As mentioned previously, to make application of what Peter is saying here it is imperative that we see it in a historical context.

In ancient Roman times women would pull up their long hair and curl or braid it in elaborate styles. Thin plates of finely crafted gold of, shaped to look like lace or ribbons, or combs made of gold, were oftentimes interwoven with the hair. This would make it appear more ornamental when the sunlight reflected off of it. Small golden buckles were also placed in different parts of the hair, as well as pearls and precious stones of different colors.

Roman women would spend costly sums of money and hours arranging their elaborate hairstyles with gold, pearls and precious jewels. Their vanity and obsession became so bad that they feared anything that might come into contact with their hair.

So Peter is talking about women who (a) meticulously braided their hair in elaborate styles with jewelry, (b) wore excessive amounts of gold jewelry [oftentimes woven into their hair] and (c) wore suggestive clothing designed to make themselves appear socially superior and/or sexually attractive.

The emphasis was on drawing attention to both the social and the feminine “assets” they had. Temple prostitutes would normally wear their hair like this publically.

As today, in Peter’s day there were mainly two kinds of women that spent this much time and money on making themselves look attractive in this way: (1) the wealthy class and (2) women of loose morals. The latter included women who served as “religious” prostitutes in the pagan temple rites.

These were all obsessed to impress.

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8 In the Lord’s condemnation of the nation’s gross idolatry there is specific denunciation of the excessive luxury the women were indulging themselves—it would all be destroyed in the coming judgment of the Babylonian captivity. See *Isa. 3:17-23*.

9 The apostle Paul also addresses this issue in *1 Tim. 2:9-10* where it is more obvious that he is talking about not emulating the immodest attire of “loose women”.

10 In one of the “I Love Lucy” episodes this took on the form of the “evil, wicked city woman” that Lucy played to the hilt and Ernie Kovacs was challenged to deal with. *Prov. 7* describes such a woman. See also *Prov. 6:24-29*. 
In principle, women today are not without the same pressure to use their feminine wiles to be outwardly attractive to men and desired by them. Sexuality can be used as a tool to gain an advantage or it can be used as God intended it; as part of a loving and intimate marriage.

A Christian wife’s utmost motive in the way she adorns herself needs to match her testimony and be firmly based on the goal of bringing her unsaved husband to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. By accentuating the sensual aspect of their relationship she is not challenging the husband to consider the claims of the Gospel.

Peter is saying that compromising your Christian testimony by degrading yourself to the level of using worldly indulgence, being obsessed with outward beauty is not the way to bring your unbelieving husband to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A wife can be “sexy”, but Peter’s point is that you won’t win an unsaved husband to Christ through sex appeal.

Any external adornment or apparel, which obsesses the mind, time and cost and inflames sensual desires more than the virtues of the heart, is inappropriate for a Christian wife. The adornment and apparel should be such as to minimize catering to worldly desires.

So what’s the answer? In general, the testimony of a Christian woman must be equally matched by godly behavior and practice. For the sake of her testimony she must dress decently and modestly without coming across “saying” to a man, “Here I am, come and take me.”

Christian wives, don’t be obsessed with or focus your energies on external attractiveness to the exclusion of your inner beauty and so make yourself appear “sexy” outwardly but degrading yourself to the point of making yourself look like a “prostitute”.

Specifically, a Christian wife can adorn herself to be attractive without effectively saying to her unbelieving husband, “Look at me. I’m desirable, don’t you want to make me happy by receiving Christ as your Savior?”

This also serves as a forewarning to young Christian women in search of a husband. If the unsaved man you plan to marry cannot be won to Christ by your sex appeal before you marry, it becomes highly doubtful that you will ever win him to Christ by sex appeal afterward. This is why the Bible puts the emphasis on a believer marrying another believer so that they are “equally yoked” [see 2 Cor. 6:14-16].

In summary, Christian life has a different standard of dress and adornment from the world’s.

Peter is saying to wives who have unbelieving husbands, don’t make yourself look like one of the vain, worldly women or like one of the prostitutes. Don’t emulate what the secular world thinks “beauty” should look like. Don’t be fooled into thinking that “sexy” is the same thing as “beauty”. Don’t strive to look like a “Playboy Bunny” or a Victoria Secrets runway model.

Doing so may temporarily gratify an unbelieving husband’s sensual desires and fulfill her need for her husband’s affection; but Peter is implying that it will fail to win him to Christ, which is the ultimate goal. So Christian wives, don’t stoop to using worldly tactics—you’re “in the world but not of it” [John 15:19; 17:14-16].

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11 An old saying crudely puts it this way: “If a man can get his milk ‘free’ why would he want to buy the cow”.
12 Indeed, out of respect for this command, in good conscience Bible believing pastors refuse to marry a believer together with an unbeliever. They will marry two believers and two unbelievers, but not one with the other.
Instead, Peter tells these wives the correct way, the godly way, to command the respect of their unbelieving husband and win them over to faith in Jesus Christ—through your internal feminine beauty and charms......

[......rather let it be the hidden person of the heart] This is referring to the part of a person that can’t be visibly seen—it’s the inner person. It’s referring to a person’s character and attitude, which comes from the heart that has it’s own, special kind of beauty.

This inner beauty is experienced through a personal relationship rather than what is outwardly seen—regardless of how attractive it looks. It is something that God sees all the time:

In choosing a successor to King Saul, the prophet Samuel is told:

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”—1 Sam. 16:7

This makes sense for a Christian wife, or any Christian woman for that matter. She needs to align her heart with what pleases the LORD and the attributes that He thinks are important [i.e., love, kindness, faithfulness, grace and mercy].

When that happens a wife will display a humble and loving spirit.

Be in style, dress up in a way that is “attractive”, but don’t try to use that as the means of winning someone to the Lord. We need more inward adornment today—that is the thing which is important.

[with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit.] The word “incorruptible” is the same word that Peter uses to describe the Christian’s heavenly inheritance {1 Pet. 1:4} and also the Word of God {1 Pet. 1:23}.

This kind of beauty does not decay, is indestructible, it can never be destroyed and it will never perish!

So there is an non-perishing beauty [of the heart] that consists of a gentle and quiet spirit. It is more precious than outward beauty because it cannot be purchased with money.

The word rendered “gentle” means “meek” and implies humility—power under control.

The word rendered “quiet” means “peaceful” and implies that ones spirit is undisturbed or unfazed by worldly standards of beauty. Outward beauty is perishable, but inner beauty never perishes!

In the Book of Ruth, we read that when Boaz went into the field and saw that beautiful maid of Moab, Ruth, it was “love-at-first-sight”. But have you noticed something else? Boaz had heard of her character beforehand {ref. Ruth 1:15-17; 2:11-12}. He had heard that she had a marvelous, wonderful character, and he fell in love with her total person.

Instead of drawing attention to outward adornment and beauty, a Christian wife’s true beauty should be a humble and peaceful spirit, which is a beauty that is non-perishable.

[which is very precious in the sight of God.] Such inner beauty is extremely precious in God’s sight because it demonstrates faithfulness on the part of the wife. The profession of her heart continues the sanctification of her life and promotes holiness {see 1 Pet. 1:13-16}.

[For in this manner, in former times] Peter now draws attention to Old Testament examples of wives modeling the beauty of a humble and peaceful heart in submission to their husbands.
The holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves. They were holy women, godly and sanctified women setting themselves apart to serve the LORD, and who put their faith entirely in God. The adornment of these women was their inner beauty.

Being submissive to their own husbands. They were submissive to their husbands in the sense earlier described. They “arranged themselves under” their husbands headship.

As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. The example Peter specifically gives is that of Sarah, who, out of respect for God, obeyed her husband and called him, “lord”—that is the “head” of their family.

Although this was a common oriental title given by wives to their husbands in the Middle East, and elsewhere, the important idea being conveyed here is an attitude of respect. It is a title not necessarily a universal obligation for today. However, the attitude of respect behind this greeting is what is being emphasized.

In calling her husband “lord” was Sarah reduced to being a doormat? Or a “second-class citizen”? Absolutely not!

She had a mind of her own and, for example, she exercised her maternal rights in telling Abraham to send away Hagar and Ishmael because of the conflict it was bringing into the family—especially in regards to the “chosen” son, Isaac. Even though Ishmael was Abraham’s son he heeded his wife’s request after God spoke to him. Refer to Gen. 21:9-13.

But Sarah still voluntarily “arranged herself under” Abraham and looked up to him as the head of their house. And in scripture she is commended for it. Why? Because she was being faithful! Note that she is listed among those in the “Hall of Faith” {Heb. 11}:

By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.—Heb. 11:11

Whose daughters you are if you do good. Since the recipients of Peter’s letter were Christians of Jewish background, they were descendants of Sarah through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

However, the Bible also refers to all Christians as children of God {e.g., John 1:12; 1 Jn. 3:1-2} we can consider this to be figuratively true for all Christian wives who follow Sarah’s example faith.

To “do good” means to continue living a life of faith and purity; sanctified in Christ.

And are not afraid with any terror. The Greek word rendered “afraid” is used throughout the New Testament and can mean “to be frightened or alarmed or shocked”.

The Greek word rendered “terror” [rendered “amazement” in the KJV] is used only here by Peter and literally means to “fly away in fear”. It is the kind of fear that Winston Churchill spoke about when he said, during the constant bombardment of London during WWII, “All we have to fear is fear itself”.

The emphasis here seems to be on fearing uncertainty or being terrified of the unknown and seeking to flee from it.

How does this fit into the context of what Peter is saying?

13 For the spiritual and doctrinal significance of this see Gal. 4:21-31.
Earlier the question was asked, “But how far should a Christian wife go in her submission to him?” It’s now time to answer that question in the context of what Peter says here.

God would certainly not want a believing wife [i.e., a “daughter”] to engage in sinful {Eph. 5:1-7} or questionable {1 Cor. 10:23; 1 Thess. 5:22} behavior that would spoil her Christian testimony {Phil. 4:8}. Examples would include being asked to watch a pornographic movie or going to a strip club; or something more dangerous like robbing a business, or any other illegal activity.

Even though it might cause strife in such a marriage, a Christian wife should not live in fear, terrified, of “losing” her husband if she doesn’t do something immoral or illegal that he demands.

She should not be deceived into “giving in” by charges that she is not being “submissive”. Holiness trumps obedience to a husband’s immoral and/or illegal desires.

Peter is saying that a Christian wife needs to overcome her fear with faith and resolve not to participate in anything that would undermine her Christian testimony—the husband might be temporarily pleased with her “obedience” to his desires, but in the long-run he will lose respect for the Gospel message and make it even harder to win him over!

What if the unbelieving husband has “had enough” and wants to leave, wants a divorce? God has already anticipated this and the scriptures address that situation.

If the unbelieving husband [or wife] wants a divorce, the believing wife [or husband] is under no obligation to force him [her] to stay. Note:

But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace. For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

—1 Cor. 7:15-16

You see, this young woman put her love for her fiancé above her love for the LORD. She was more fearful of what might happen to her if she didn’t get to marry this man than fearful of what would happen if she married an unbeliever—her fear caused her to ignore scripture’s warning not to be “unequally yoked” with a nonbeliever {2 Cor. 6:14-16}. Peter is saying to a Christian wife with an unbelieving husband, don’t be intimidated by that kind of fear.

vv. 7 ➢ RESPONSIBILITIES OF Husbands FOR A HEALTHY MARRIAGE

[7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.]

[Husbands, likewise.....] That is, in similar fashion, with “order” in mind, Christian husbands are responsible to do something as well. They too are to have a humble attitude and act in a loving manner.

Someone has said that a man marries a woman thinking she will always stay the same; while a woman marries a man thinking she can change him for the better. Oftentimes, this is where the trouble starts.

[.....dwell with them with understanding] The Greek word rendered “dwell” literally means “to reside together” or “co-inhabit”; and the Greek word rendered “understanding” means knowledge [i.e., Gk. gnosis].

FIRSTLY, a husband is admonished to live with his wife in knowledge of her needs.

Earlier it was stated that it was critical for husbands to understand not only the physiological but also the psychological differences between men and women.
In the book\textsuperscript{14}, \textit{His Needs, Her Needs}, Dr. Willard Harley has compiled the 5 \textbf{MOST BASIC NEEDS} that a \textit{woman} has in marriage and the 5 \textbf{MOST BASIC NEEDS} that a \textit{man} has in marriage. He has discovered in over twenty-five years of marriage and family counseling that meeting these needs is not optional—they represent real and essential physical and emotional needs that need to be met by both a wife and husband if the marriage is to be healthy and remain healthy.

Here are the lists compiled over a 25-year period, in order of their importance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3-1: Compilation of a Woman’s vs. a Man’s Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Her Needs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection/Cheired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation/Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty &amp; openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support/protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Earlier it was also mentioned that men have the hormone \textit{testosterone} and women have \textit{estrogen}.

A husband also needs to understand that his wife does not think like he does. There is a real, \textit{physiological} reason for this. Some refer to this as the “\textit{testosterone effect}” that occurs during the start of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} trimester of human gestation or pregnancy.

Medical science has shown us what happens to the brain of a male child during gestation. Around the 13\textsuperscript{th} week of pregnancy the male hormone \textit{testosterone} initiates the production of chemicals and proteins that perform one of the most amazing and significant functions of human development. Thousands of nerves, directly connecting the left and right half of the brain, are literally dissolved! I know, many women are now thinking, “Boy, that explains a lot!”

Now it’s an established medical fact that the left and right halves of the human brain process thoughts very differently, which results in the brain having two different \textit{modes} of thinking.

The left half of the brain is \textit{analytical} and the right half is \textit{imaginative}; the former thinks in “black-and-white” and is very \textit{logical}, while the latter thinks in gray-shades and is very \textit{emotional} and \textit{creative} and is able to think “outside-the-box”.

Another way of describing this is: \textit{rocket engines} and \textit{computer programs} are designed with the \textit{left-half} of the brain while \textit{poetry} and \textit{music} are composed by the \textit{right-half} of the brain.

Women can \textit{simultaneously} think in either mode, but a man has to consciously switch between these two different modes of thinking. They are “\textit{serial processors}”. And males usually have a dominant mode of thinking\textsuperscript{16} which corresponds to either being \textit{left-handed} [right-brain dominated] or \textit{right-handed} [left-brain dominated].


\textsuperscript{15} Refer to \textit{Prov. 5:15-20; Song. 7:1-9} and especially \textit{1 Cor. 7:3-6}.

\textsuperscript{16} This is confirmed by studies in which male and female artists, writers and poets were tested to see if they were right-handed or left-handed. In females the result was almost 50%/50% but in the males it was 20% right-handed [analytically dominated] and 80% left-handed [artistically dominated]!
Because of the way that God has literally “wired” the brain, men think *successively* and women think *simultaneously*. Men are “*serial processors*” and women are “*parallel processors*”.

One might say that a woman uses her entire brain while a man uses half of his brain at any given time. At any given time a man is only thinking with one side of his brain—he lives “half-brained” as it were.

Men prefer to *hunt* and *fix things*. Women prefer to *nurture* and *talk about things*. Men are *visually oriented*. Women are *verbally oriented*. Sound familiar? Just take a look at the priority of needs in Table 3-1.

That’s why men don’t like to go shopping unless they know exactly what they want—they go out, grab it and get out. A woman likes to browse and take her time.

It’s why a woman can listen with comprehension to a half-dozen conversations at a lunch table while a man typically becomes confused and frustrated.

That’s why God made woman for man—he is incomplete without her! And a husband would be wise to listen to his wife’s concerns, advice and suggestions.

Remember, God made the woman from the man’s side—as a “helper” fit for his needs. She was not made from his head [to rule over him] or from his feet [to be “trampled” upon].

So, for husbands to dwell with their wives with understanding would include fulfilling “her needs”, not only *physically* but also *emotionally*; understanding and making allowances for these *differences*.

[…..*giving honor to the wife*] By living with their wives with understanding, a husband is communicating not only do I love you, but also saying, “I *value* you and *hold you great esteem*.”

Remember that the first need a wife has is to feel *loved* and be *cherished*—her number one need!

It is enlightening to see what the apostle Paul has to say about husbands and wives:

> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is Head of the Church; and He is the Savior of the Body. Therefore, just as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish..........................................................

So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself......This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.—*Eph 5:22-29, 32-33*

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the *LORD*. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.—*Col. 3:18-19*

- In the God’s order of things, there is a *spiritual correspondence* in the “marital” relationship between Christ & the Church and between a husband & a wife. In 2 *Cor. 11:2* Paul tells believers; “*For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*” And in *Rev. 19:9* the apostle John is told to write; “*Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!*”
- Wives are to submit to their own husbands [not another husband] as is appropriate in their relationship to Christ; i.e., treat them with the respect and honor they give to the Savior.
• Husbands are to love their wives and not be sharp-tongued toward them, i.e., they are not to be impatient and respond to their wives with bitter, “poisonous”, words.

Wives are consistently and explicitly exhorted to submit to their husbands, but husbands are consistently and explicitly exhorted to love their wives.

Why didn’t Paul tell wives to love their husbands? And why didn’t he tell husbands to submit to their wives. I believe the answer lies not only in the way that a man and woman differ physically and emotionally, but also the nature of temptation as a result of the fall. Note:

To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.”—Gen. 3:16

Note a wife’s desire will still be for her husband despite the pain of childbirth and she is told that her husband will rule over her. This can easily lead to resentment in any marriage in which neither spouse fulfills their God-given roles as husband and wife.

As a result of the fall, everyone’s natural inclination is to rebel [i.e., “bristle”] against God’s will. Thus, a woman’s natural inclination is to rebel against God’s design for the marriage relationship and not submit to her husband—not letting him be her “head”.

This is why husbands hear their wives saying, “I just want to be with you” and why wives hear their husbands saying, “I just want to provide for you”. In reality each should desire the same thing as the other.

One could generalize [and there are always some exceptions] and conclude that men find it easier to submit to wives but harder to love them. For the wife I believe it is the other-way-around—women find it easier to love husbands but harder to submit to them.

A man’s natural inclination is not to show his emotions [default is using the left-half of his brain], thus the explicit admonition to love his wife.

A woman’s natural inclination is to express her emotions related to what she’s thinking about and verbally unleash on her husband [default is using both halves of her brain at the same time], thus the explicit admonition to submit to her husband.

For the husband this means giving his wife the same sacrificial love that Christ gave the Church.

The husband is the “head” of the wife; in the same sense that Christ is Head of the Church and Savior of the Body [the Church]. He is also responsible for loving his wife as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed Himself for her.

His focus should be to cherish her, protect her and keep her pure. A husband is to love his wife as he does himself. A husband should be willing to give up his life for his wife! And what right-thinking woman would reject that kind of love and not want to submit to it?

Husbands are to respect their wives for who they are, not for who they want them to be. A husband who does not love and respect his wife does not fully love himself.

The wife is to be subject to her husband; in the same sense that the Church [i.e., believers] is subject to Christ. She is to show her husband honor and respect; and defer to his godly desires for her.

However, a husband “beating his wife over the head” with Biblical admonitions is (a) not living with them with understanding and (b) not demonstrating the love of Christ towards her.
[…..as to the weaker vessel] To fully understand, and appreciate, this admonition, we first need to understand what the original Greek words rendered “weaker” and “vessel” mean.

First, let’s look at the Greek word rendered “vessel” refers to the human body, which provides a “tent” or “house” for our soul and spirit. For example the apostle Paul uses this language:

“For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands17, eternal in the heavens.”—2 Cor. 5:1

And Peter himself uses this analogy:

“I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.”

—2 Pet. 1:13-14

This “vessel” can be used for honor or dishonor; depending on the inclination of the individual18. See 2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Thess. 4:4 and 2 Tim. 2:20-21.

A Christian is of course admonished and expected to use their body for honor since it is the dwelling place [literally, “temple”) of the Holy Spirit {e.g., see 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20]. This is why Peter spends a great deal of time in his letters reminding Christians to be holy as their Savior is holy.

The Greek word rendered “weaker” in this context means “fragile” or “vulnerable”. Women are more prone to suffering damage either physically or psychologically.

SECONDLY, not only are husbands to live with their wives with knowledge, they are to remember they are more fragile and vulnerable.

This has sometimes been compared to the difference between a Ford truck and a Ferrari. Neither is really inferior to the other, but each excels in areas of performance for which it was designed. The truck is built primarily to haul materials and navigate over rough terrain, while a Ferrari is built to efficiently carry two people and to go fast on smooth terrain. They are equally superior in what they were designed to do. A person who has one of each is equally rounded.

That is just the way it is and it’s not a sign that a woman is intellectually, morally, or spiritually inferior. But her strengths can become weaknesses when not properly understood and used.

I include the following excerpt from Barnes Notes on the New Testament because it captures and summarizes the essence of Peter’s meaning:

By this it is not necessarily meant that she is of feebler capacity, or inferior mental endowments, but that she is more tender and delicate; more subject to infirmities and weaknesses; less capable of enduring fatigue and toil; less adapted to the rough and stormy scenes of life. As such, she should be regarded and treated with special kindness and attention. This is a reason, the force of which all can see and appreciate. So we feel toward a sister; so we feel toward a beloved child, if he is of feeble frame and delicate constitution; and so every man should feel in relation to his wife. She may have mental endowments equal to his own; she may have moral qualities in every way superior to his; but the God of nature has made her with a more delicate frame, a more fragile structure, and with a body subject to many infirmities to which the more hardy frame of man is a stranger.

17 That is, a new body made for living in Heaven.
18 “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels; that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” {2 Cor. 4:7-8}.
In this context, a woman’s weakness stems from her innate desire/drive for spirituality. When someone wants something badly they can oftentimes be easily deceived. Although this is true for both men and women, it seems to be especially true for women based on their “spiritual DNA”.

In the Garden of Eden Eve was seduced, not to indulge in pleasure, but to be more spiritual. In order to be more like God, she was the “weaker” vessel in the sense that she was more vulnerable to Satan’s suggestion to eat of the fruit from the “TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL”. Note:

Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.—Gen. 3:4-6

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!—2 Cor. 11:2-4

And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.—1 Tim. 2:14

I suppose one could say that there is actually a God-ordained “double-standard” here and it is slanted towards favoring the wife’s needs. But this is reasonable and just, for the husband is considered the “head” of the family as Christ is the Head of the Church.

The burden of responsibility is on the husband to be the initiator of love, not only living with his wife with knowledge and sensitivity to her needs, but also to honor, guard and protect the vulnerabilities of his wife.

[…..and as being heirs together of the grace of life] Peter now reminds husbands of the sanctity of the marriage relationship—it models Christ and His Bride, the Church.

The “grace of life” refers to the EVERLASTING LIFE that a married Christian couple shares through their faith as “joint heirs in Christ” {Rom. 8:16-17}.

Peter is assuming here that the married couple is what the Bible refers to as “equally yoked”—both the husband and wife are born-again believers, sanctified in Jesus Christ. Refer to the apostle Paul’s discussion on this in 2 Cor. 6:14-16. Note:

Gen. 1:24 tells us, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh”; which is quoted by Paul in Eph. 5:31 related to marriage.

Husbands and wives are together in Jesus Christ, they are not only joined as “one” in the consummation of the marriage relationship; but also “one in Christ” {Gal. 3:28c} and therefore joint heirs in experiencing the grace of eternal life.

This fact should always be a mitigating factor in preventing and resolving marital disputes.

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19 Historically, this can be seen in the fact that a majority of false religious [Gnostic] cults were founded by women; e.g., Mary Eddy Baker [Christian Science], Ellen G. White [7th Day Adventism], Helena Blavatsky [Theosophy].
[…..that your prayers may not be hindered] The Greek word rendered “hindered” literally means “to chop down or into”; thus, to stifle, interrupt, or, in more modern vernacular, to “short-circuit”.

So Peter mentions something very serious here: the relationship a husband has with his wife determines whether or not the husband’s prayers are interrupted—are they being accepted by God!

If a Christian husband is not treating his wife with understanding, acknowledging her as a person of great value and forgets that they are equal in the sense that both are joint heirs together in the grace of eternal life; then his prayers in essence will go no “higher-than-the-ceiling”.

This tells us that the LORD is very concerned that a husband values his wife and treats her with dignity and honor. Not doing so will significantly impact his spiritual life and, in turn, his relationship with the LORD.

vv. 8-12 ➤ The Goal is Church Unity & Receiving a Blessing

[8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil]

[Finally, all of you be of one mind.] “Finally” introduces a new section of Peter’s letter. He now turns and addresses all the believers—this includes every one who has been born-again and therefore is part of the Body-of-Christ—the Church.

The Greek word used by Peter rendered “one mind” does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It means "to have the same understanding"; "to be like-minded". Today we would use the phrase, “be on the same page”.

The idea here is that there should be unity in the Body-of-Christ—His Church!

The ultimate goal of unity is that the Church might be blessed.

The admonition is that all believers, everywhere, are to be “like-minded”; that is, “be on the same page”. This is something every believer has been “called to”.

But what “one mind” is Peter referring to? If we strive for having the wrong mind we will fail in achieving unity in the Church.

Fortunately we are given an example of where this unity comes from and what this unity looks like:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Rom. 12:1-2

20 Quoted from Psalms 34:12-16.
21 It is interesting to note that only two of the seven churches spoken of in the book of Revelation received no negative comments from the LORD: the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia. Was it perhaps because they were unified, of “one mind” in Jesus Christ?
Each believer, as he or she ministers their gift(s) in the Church needs to do it as a royal priest {1
Pet. 1:9}, faithfully presenting their bodies as living, holy sacrifices. This is after all, each
believer’s spiritual service.

Also, a believer thoughts and behavior should not be patterned after the world’s schematic or
blueprint, but rather be metamorphosized by the renewal of their intellect. Note what this means:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did
not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking
the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in
appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death,
even the death of the cross.—Phil. 2:5-9

Because he was humble and obedient, Jesus Christ was highly exalted so that every knee in
Heaven and earth will bow to Him and every mouth will confess that He is Lord, to the glory of
God the Father.

Peter now gives us specific admonitions on how unity in the Church is achieved.

[having compassion for one another;] The Greek word rendered “compassion” means “mutually
sympathetic” and conveys a mutual understanding of one another. Figuratively, putting yourself
into the other person’s shoes. Having the attitude; “But by the grace of God—there go I”.

[love as brothers.] The Greek word “phileo” is used here for “love”. The Greeks had at least
four different words for the various facets of “love” [agape, phileo, eros and thumos] and this one
refers to a brotherly friendship.

[be tenderhearted.] The Greek word rendered “tenderhearted” means “to show pity”.

[be courteous;] The Greek word rendered “courteous” actually means humble and is used only
once here in the New Testament. In practice it means to defer to the other person’s needs.

[not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling.] The Greek word rendered “evil” literally
means “worthless” and refers to “depraved or injurious speech”.

The Greek word rendered “reviling” means to “slander” someone or “speak abusively” about
them.

Believers are not to respond “in kind” if they are attacked this way and thus defuse the situation
and lay the groundwork peaceful reconciliation. This is hard do to in practice, but Peter
wouldn’t have given this admonition if he didn’t know it was possible—and all things are
possible with God and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[but on the contrary blessing.] Instead of returning slander for slander and abusive language for
abusive language, a believer is to respond graciously—with a blessing! That is, “to speak well
of”; with gracious words [this is the direct opposite of blasphemy).

Jesus said, “Pray for those who persecute you” {Matt. 5:44}, and Paul wrote, “When we are
cursed, we bless” {1 Cor. 4:12}.

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22 Agape, the most-used Greek word rendered love in the New Testament, means to have “esteem or
high regard for” and refers to an unselfish, sacrificial kind of love. Foremost, it is the kind of love
associated with God sending Jesus Christ to die for our sins. And it is also the word used for “love” when
the scriptures talk about a husband loving his wife. The usage of the word “agape” is actually rarely
found in Greek writings, where phileo [brotherly, friendship love], eros [self-gratifying love] and thumos
[passionate love] are mainly used but, appropriately, it is heavily used in the New Testament scriptures.
This demonstrates to all that a person is being empowered by the Holy Spirit and as a result, believers are encouraged.

[knowing that you were called to this.] Believers have been programmed to do this by God Himself.

[that you may inherit a blessing.] For those who collectively strive to maintain unity between other believers through compassion, brotherly love, tender-heartedness, common courtesy, and seeking to bless others instead of reviling them receive special blessing.

To sum this up, and drive home his point, Peter invokes the promises of blessing from Psalms 34:12-16, which describes those that are righteous in the same context.

- loving life
- refraining from speaking evil and deceitfully
- turning away from evil and doing good
- seeking peace and pursuing it

—the special blessing they receive from the LORD includes:

- seeing good days
- having the Lord watch over them
- having unhindered access to God [the Great “I am”] through their prayers

vv. 13-17  **SUFFERING UNDER CONDITIONS OF RIGHT & WRONG**

[13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. “And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled23” 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.]

[And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?] Even though Christians were [and are] being methodically persecuted, Peter reassures believers that no serious harm will come those who are living their lives by faithfully pursuing righteousness. That is, striving for holiness as Peter discusses in chapter 1.

Above that, we have God’s assurance that His word will prevail; as in 1 Pet. 1:24-25 Peter quotes from Isa. 40:6-8:

“All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever.”

[But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed.] But even if a Christian suffers because of their testimony, they remain blessed—they remain joyful and highly privileged.

Those opposed to the Gospel cannot take away or destroy the relationship we have with God through the LORD Jesus Christ!

After Paul famously declares that “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” [Rom 8:28] he writes:

---

23 Quoted from Isaiah 8:12b.
What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: “For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter”. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—Rom. 8:31-39

[“And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled”] Peter uses the same word for “afraid” [phobeo] in v.6. The Greek word rendered “troubled” literally means “to stir up or agitate”. Thus, it is referring to being disturbed or agitated—generally upset and anxious.

After quoting King David and Jesus, Peter quotes the prophet Isaiah [ Isa. 8:12b].

The context of this is during the time that the nations of Syria and Israel [the 10 “northern” Tribes] sent a request to Ahaz, king of Judah [2 “southern” Tribes] to join them in fighting the approaching Assyrians; who were dreaded for their merciless ferocity in battle. Such a confederacy would seem stronger than a single, smaller nation. Ahaz was warned through Isaiah by the LORD not to do so [because it was His plan to bring captivity to the sinful nation, Israel] and in response Ahaz refused to join them. This created new enemies and new problems, but the LORD was encouraging Ahaz not to be fearful of their threats or to be disturbed over their potential attacks. [God used Assyria to bring judgment upon Israel shortly afterward but Judah was spared at this time.]

Likewise, Peter is saying that Christians are not to be fearful of the threats of those who are opposed to the Gospel message nor be agitated over their plans—even when they form alliances against them. Jesus reminds us:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”—John 14:1-4

A believer’s relationship with the God who created the Universe and secured their salvation should cause them to be encouraged and at peace—Heaven and earth will pass away but God’s Word will prevail [ Matt. 5:18; 24:35].

A Christian has no reason to be afraid of the threats made against them—not when Jesus Christ is forever with them! We have these assurances in promises:

Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you...And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed.—Deut. 31:6, 8

24 Quoted from Psalms 44:22.
25 Reigned as king in Judah (Benjamin + Judah) between 732-716 BC.
26 722-721 BC.
And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this Rock [Christ Jesus] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.—Matt. 16:18-19

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?”—Heb. 13:5-6

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.—Phil. 4:6-7

When Jesus was teaching about the End Times He spoke about the persecution against Christians and said:

But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand [i.e., not worry about] on what you will answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist.—Luke 21:13-16

And the apostle John assures believers that they need not be afraid or troubled:

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.—1 John 4:4-6

[But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,] Or “sanctify Christ as LORD in your hearts”.

This means a believer is to set-apart Jesus Christ as LORD in their heart; it means giving Him preeminence, first-place in their lives. Note:

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. —John 14:26-27

Instead of being fearful and troubled [i.e., anxious], a believer can exalt the LORD Jesus Christ—lift Him up and worship Him.

The evidence of this will be faithfulness, obedience and joy in the LORD.

[and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,] The Greek word rendered “defense” is ‘apologist’ and it means to ‘give an answer’. We get our English words apology and apologetic from this word.

In its original meaning the word carries with it the idea of presenting an explanation—it doesn’t mean being sorry, ashamed or embarrassed for what one believes! This was actually the word used to describe the defense which a defender makes before a judge in the presence of his/her accuser.

The Greek word rendered “reason” is ‘logos’, which is the same word used for the incarnate word of God—Jesus Christ {see John 1:1, 14}; stresses communicating a thought or idea.

Jude echoes Peter’s words:

Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.—Jude 1:3
The idea here is communicating the message of hope found in the Gospel. And this implies that a believer is “studied-up” on scripture!

This hope lives within a believer. But what is the “hope” that Peter is alluding to? Well, its what he began his letter with:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.—1 Pet. 1:3-5

The hope of the believer is secured by the promise of eternal life in a resurrected body {e.g., Rom. 8:22-25; Col. 1:5; Phil. 3:20-21; Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; Heb. 6:17-19; 2 Pet. 3:11-13}

Thus, it is a hope that is based on the PROMISES OF GOD, so it is sure and anticipatory.

Amazingly, this “hope” also sanctifies a Christian:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.—1 John 3:2-3

And this does not need to be a theological treatise. Only the following elements are important in one’s testimony:

- Jesus Christ took away my emptiness [As Savior He gives my life purpose and meaning]
- Jesus Christ took away my loneliness [I was separated from my Creator]
- Jesus Christ took away my personal guilt [As Savior He cleansed me from sin and reconciled me to Himself—the One who created me forgives me of my sin]
- Jesus Christ took away all my fear and anxiety [His love for me casts out all fear]

Instead of being afraid of threats made against them and being upset and anxious about their attacks, Christians are to faithfully and boldly defend the reason(s) they have a “living hope”; through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This hope includes an inheritance that is indestructible, uncontaminated, permanent, and reserved in Heaven for them.

The believers to whom Peter was writing were going through persecution for their faith and suffering grief over their testimony, but Peter is reassuring them not to be afraid or disturbed, but instead be prepared to share the reasons for the hope they have and thereby defend the message of the Gospel.

As Christians, we are called to answer the questions of all those who ask us why we believe what we believe—why we have an overwhelming optimistic anticipation of the future. Note that this doesn’t just apply to a pastor, teacher, deacon or elder—it applies to every believer!

[with meekness and fear:] Believers are to do this with “meekness” and “fear”; meaning with gentleness and respect. In presenting the Gospel, Christians are not to yell, get angry, be rude, resort to name-calling, or show any other form of disrespect.

Believers are to remain humble and in self-control, but steadfast and bold in their testimony and sharing God’s word; knowing that what they believe is the Truth and can lead to the salvation of another person.

Christians are on God’s “side” and He desires all to be saved; as Peter himself declares! {see 2 Pet. 3:9}.
Christians do not need to be stressed out over answering those who question them about their faith—they just need to share what the Word of God says. Note:

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”
—Isa. 55:10

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.—Heb. 4:12

When asked, a believer is obligated to truthfully communicate the reason for their “hope” but also do it in a calm, humble and respectful way.

[having a good conscience.] Peter will refer to this again in v.21 where it becomes obvious that he is talking about the personal guilt for sin that is removed when, in obedience, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is received and believed.

There, Peter alludes to the baptism of the Holy Spirit through the power of Jesus’ resurrection. He is speaking of having been “born-again”. This is the only way a person can have a “good conscience”!

Moral consciousness demands a penalty for sin, which the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, paid.

A believer, by definition, has had their sins forgiven, their guilt and shame removed and they can now live their lives with a clear conscience—that is, free of guilt and shame!

Christians can communicate the truth of the Gospel with a good conscience because of who they are representing—the Creator of the Universe and the Savior of the world

[that when they defame you as evildoers.] The Greek word rendered “defame” here means ‘to injure someone by speaking evil of them’; that is, heaping insults on them and can be thought of as slander with extreme malice and prejudice.

Peter is saying that it’s not a matter of “if” but of “when” a believer is slandered by having evil maliciously spoken against him/her.

However, there is some irony here. Unbelievers are under the control and authority of Satan and in spiritual darkness. As such they can be described as follows:

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!—Isa. 5:20

Because the anti-theist hates God, from their unholy perspective, Christians are the “evildoers”.

It is to be remembered that most people are very little acquainted with the true nature of the Christian message; and it is known that during Peter’s time they charged Christians with the most despicable vices, even accusing them of practices at which human nature recoils.

27 One example of this pertains to a complete misunderstanding of the symbolism of the Lord’s Supper, or the Communion Meal. The pagans accused Christians of cannibalism based on Jesus telling His disciples; “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” {John 6:53-57}. But of course Jesus was speaking figurative, not literally, because He came to fulfill every aspect of the Law, including that of the prohibition against drinking of blood {Lev. 17:12}. It is ironic that the Roman Catholic Church, along with the Eastern or Greek Orthodox Church, teaches that the communion elements, the bread and juice of grapes, literally turns into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus. This is known as “Transubstantiation”.

1 Peter Chapter 3

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Nowhere is this more graphically illustrated than in the picture\textsuperscript{28} of the wall carving shown in Figure 3-1 below. The carving, possibly a form of ancient graffiti, is enhanced in the sketch to the right to show more clearly what it depicts.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3-1.png}
\caption{Ancient Roman “Graffiti” Ridiculing a Christian and the Gospel Message.}
\end{figure}

This carving was found on an ancient wall in Rome and is dated shortly after the apostle Paul’s death \{67-68 AD\}, and perhaps prior to the Fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The carving shows a Christian named “Alexander” worshiping the crucified Jesus who is depicted as a donkey. The inscription roughly translated into English reads; “Alexamenos worships his god”.

This is a profound archeological and historical testament to the how Christians were viewed by those who reject the Gospel. This has not changed for two millennia and Peter’s encouraging words are as vital today as they were when first written.

But what is amazing is that this carving represents tangible proof that Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross according to the Gospels!

Today, things haven’t changed much. The world continues to intentionally reject, mock, insult and attack Christians in many different ways by spreading lies about them. They do this by either ignorantly or intentionally perverting teachings of Christianity.

It is obvious that Satan is actually behind these attacks. The one who comes as a LIAR to devour and destroy \{1 Pet. 5:8; John 8:44; 10:10\} and is actually called a slanderer and accuser

Usually, Christians are defamed by being called names or having labels put on them. But in every case, it’s because they have rejected God’s word. Examples of this include:

The label ‘bigot’ can be a “response” for the rejection of \textbf{Prov. 14:12; 16:25; John 14:6; Acts 4:12.}

\textsuperscript{28} Taken from C. Marvin Pate’s \textit{Teach the Text “Romans”} in commentary related to \textbf{Rom. 1:16; “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God…..”} with reference to \textbf{1 Cor. 1:18-25.}
The label ‘**homophobe**’ can be a “response” for the rejection of Gen. 19:4-7; Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Judges 19:22; 1 Kings 14:24; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:8-10; Jude 1:7.

The label ‘**Islamophobe**’ can be a “response” for the rejection of Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; 6:4, 14-15; Psalms 81:9; Isa. 26:4; 4:10-11; 44:8; 45:21-22; 46:9; Jer. 25:6-7; Matt. 4:10; Col. 2:18-19; 1 John 5:20.

And in every other instance, for any other “label” the same association can be made—the ridicule is based on a misunderstanding or rejection of the teaching of holy scripture.

Oftentimes, the ridicule heaps onto Christians takes on the form of **intimidation** to make them feel embarrassed or look ridiculous.

The following statement represents the stereotypical attitude of **ridicule** and **rejection** an anti-theist has towards Christianity:

“The belief that some cosmic Jewish zombie can make you live forever if you symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood and telepathically tell him that you accept him as your master, so he can remove an evil force from your soul that is present in humanity because a rib woman was convinced by a talking snake to eat from a magical tree....Makes perfect sense”

But Jesus told us it would be like this:

And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.—**Matt. 10:22**

Peter tells believers how they should handle this..................

> [those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.] The Greek word rendered “revile” means “to reject and ridicule”.

This is the other-side-of-the-coin. On the one-hand believers are **slandered** and **falsely accused** of doing evil things {v.16b}. On the other-hand their message of Redemption in Jesus Christ is **rejected** and they are **ridiculed** for their good Christian testimony!

They may think or say things like: “Oh look, there goes ‘miss goody-two-shoes’,” or “Oh, there’s ‘Mr. holier than thou’,” or “Oh, he won’t work on Sundays—he’s a ‘Christian’.”

Earlier, on the premise that all believers are foreigners and strangers in this world, Peter addressed the issue of Christian **integrity** and **purity**, which is anchored on **sanctification** and **holiness**. In chapter 2, v.12 he wrote: “......having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation” [i.e., when they are saved]

Evidently, since Peter brings up this subject again, it was important for him to have believers know and understand that people of the world will **misrepresent the Christian message** and **accuse believers** of evil things that are untrue. In doing so, they are only emulating their “father”, Satan, who is a “slanderer” and the “accuser of the believers”

This is all about a Christian being “**blameless**”. Not that he/she is never accused of wrong-doing, but that if so accused, that upon examination, not one charge of wrong-doing or evil will stand-up to scrutiny.

This will only happen when a believer lives their life with integrity, consistently holding fast to the true teachings of scripture.

One aspect of being “**blameless**” includes praying for those who do slander and despitefully use you {see **Luke 6:28**}. 

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In this way those who speak evil about you will ultimately be shamed for their false accusations.

[For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil] It is a much better witness to suffer the slander and verbal abuse [if God allows this] for doing good than for actually doing evil.

As Peter mentioned earlier, when ridiculed and suffering for practicing their faith, Christians are in good company:

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth", who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.—1 Pet. 2:19-23

In quoting the Messianic prophecy from Isaiah Peter is giving a Christian the example to follow—Jesus Christ was ridiculed and suffered for His message but He remained faithful and obedient. Jesus committed Himself to the God who sees everything and is just! Believers are to do the same.

The insults, ridicule and slander experienced by Paul followed him to prison; but he viewed this as an advantage! Note:

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.—Phil. 1:12-18

By repeating Paul’s message and mocking it the opponents of the Gospel, seeking to add suffering to the apostle, were actually furthering its reach! What a positive and joyful outlook.

What is ironic is that many atheists ridicule “believers” who themselves have rejected certain truths of scripture. This is especially evident in the case of “Christians” who accept the Gospel message but reject the literal, historical narrative of Creation found in the book of Genesis. Even the atheist sees the importance of taking ALL of God’s word as true.

The following is a quote from Richard Dawkins, an ardent and outspoken opponent of the Christianity. In his statement he ridicules those “Christians” who have compromised their belief with Darwinian Evolution, have “bought-in” to deep-time [billions of years of earth history] and believe that the Creation narrative is symbolic or allegorical:

“Oh but of course the story of Adam and Eve was only ever symbolic, wasn’t it? Symbolic?! So Jesus had himself tortured and executed for a symbolic sin by a non-existent individual? Nobody not brought up in the faith could reach any verdict other than ‘barking mad!’”

By doing so, Dawkins exposes the fallacy of not taking all of God’s Word as true and how seriously it should undermine a Christian’s faith in the Gospel message!

29 Quoted from Isa. 53:9.
v. 18-20  **THE ETERNAL GOSPEL MESSAGE**

[18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.]

Peter now gives us the fundamental elements of the Gospel message which include:

- Jesus Christ suffered [and died] for sins only once
- The Just suffered for the unjust
- This was done this act Jesus Christ reconciles us back to God
- Jesus Christ died physically, in the flesh [not figuratively or allegorically]
- Jesus Christ was resurrected by the power of God’s Spirit

Amazingly, he will also show us that the same Spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead also proclaimed the Gospel in various ways in the past; specifically during the time of Noah.

[For Christ also suffered once for sins…..] Note that Jesus Christ suffered only once to pay the penalty of death for our sins. He’s not coming again to do that because once was enough! Note that the author of the book of Hebrews has much to say about this:

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.—**Heb. 7:26-28**

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once-for-all, having obtained eternal redemption.—**Heb. 9:11-12**

Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.—**Heb. 9:23-28**

And because Jesus paid the ultimate “price” for our redemption, that is, He only needed to die for sins once; our salvation and sanctification is also once-for-all. Our salvation is secure because Christ’s death on the cross is secure.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins....."Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them" (which are offered according to the law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God”. He takes away the first that He may establish the second. By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once-for-all. —**Heb. 10:4, 8-10**

And finally, because of this, the faith that our hope rests on the fact that it was once-for-all delivered to believers. This faith is grounded in the Gospel message of salvation.
Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.—**Jude 1:3-4**

*the just for the unjust….]* This is so unlike the expectation of the world. It is God’s loving-kindness that accomplishes this. Because *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son* {**John 3:16**}. Jesus demonstrated this kind of love and said:

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.—**John 15:12-13**

Paul puts it this way:

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us*, in that *while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*—**Rom. 5:6-8**

[…..that He might bring us to God] Jesus Christ’s death on the cross brought reconciliation between God and man and makes “peace” between God and us.

We were once enemies of God, but through faith in the substitutionary atonement of Christ’s sacrifice we can now become “children of God”. Note:

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.—**Rom. 5:8-11**

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross. And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight.—**Col. 1:19-22**

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.—**John 1:12-13**

…..that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.—**Eph 2:12-18**

[…..being put to death in the flesh,] Jesus Christ died a physical death—*this doctrinal truth cannot be over-emphasized!* One would think that this would be a settled fact of Biblical history.

This may seem obvious to Christians, but there many cults [false religious groups] who deny not only the *bodily resurrection* of Jesus Christ, but also His *bodily death* as well.
Most of us have heard the term “anti-Christ” applied to the end-time “man-of-sin”, the “son-of-perdition”, the “lawless one” \(2\) \(\text{Thess. 2:3, 8}\); to whom Satan [the “dragon”] gives his power, throne and great authority \(\text{Rev.13:2}\).

But interestingly, although “antichrist” is an appropriate expression for the evil ruler of the end-time one-world government, the Bible never directly refers to this man using this term.

However, the Bible does refer to “antichrist”; more specifically, the apostle John speaks of this. The term refers to a teaching or a person who denies that Jesus was the Christ/Messiah [i.e., the anointed One] and came in physical form, i.e., in the flesh \(\text{e.g., John 1:14}\). Note:

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.\(1\) \(\text{John 2:22}\)

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.\(1\) \(\text{John 4:1-3}\)

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.\(2\) \(\text{John 1:7}\)

Without Jesus’ death on the cross there would not have been a resurrection; and if there had been no resurrection there can be no real “forgiveness of sins”. One can readily see the supreme importance of this issue relative to presenting the Gospel message. Note:

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.\(–1\) \(\text{Cor. 15:12-19}\)

Christian Science, a modern-day Gnostic cult, founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy in Massachusetts, teaches and believes that Jesus had a “spiritual body” when He was on the cross, therefore He never really physically died, that there was no real resurrection and that Christ’s ascension was purely spiritual in nature.

In her book, \(\text{Science and Health}^{30}\), Eddy boldly asserts that; “His disciples believed Jesus to be dead while he was hidden in the sepulcher, whereas he was alive” (p.44). Elsewhere she states: “Jesus’ students ... did not perform many wonderful works until they saw him after his crucifixion and learned that he had not died” (pp.45-46). On p.34 of her book she writes: “[The disciples’] dear Master would rise again in the spiritual realm of reality, and ascend far above their apprehension. As the reward for his faithfulness, he would disappear to material sense in that change which has since been called the ascension”.

\(30\) Mary Baker Eddy, \(\text{Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures}\), Christian Scientist Publishing Company(1875), Boston, Mass, pp.34, 44-46.
Mary Eddy Baker would take exception to Peter’s statement here. And, according to the apostle John, the teaching of Christian Science regarding Jesus Christ would have to be classified as “antichrist”.

Theosophy, a religious philosophy, was co-founded in 1875 by a Russian immigrant named Helena Blavatsky in New York, is another modern-day Gnostic cult that denies the bodily death of Jesus Christ as atonement for our sins.

“Theosophists are great admirers of the Gnostics, and this is not at all surprising, since they have adopted much of the terminology and vocabulary of ancient Gnosticism, which looked with disdain upon the material properties of both the world and man, depersonalized God, and created various planes of spiritual progression, culminating in universal salvation and reconciliation through reincarnation and the wheel concept of progression borrowed unblushingly from Buddhism”.32

Admittedly derived from Hinduism, Theosophy does not claim any new original concepts, but presumes to present truths which are common to all religions.34

These beliefs form “in their entirety, the Wisdom-Religion, or the Universal Religion, the source from which all separate religions spring, the trunk of the Tree of Life from which they all branch forth”.35

Not surprisingly, Theosophy is based on the concept of spiritual evolution, which is also heavily promoted in New Age philosophy. Theosophy and New Age Thinking are just “old” versions of Gnosticism with a “new” coat of paint.

Theosophy does not hesitate to declare that:

God and man are the two phases of the one eternal life and consciousness that constitutes our universe! The idea of the immanence of God is that He is the universe; although he is also more than it is; that the solar system is an emanation of the Supreme Being as clouds are an emanation of the sea. This conception makes man a part of God, having potentially within him all the attributes and powers of the Supreme Being. It is the idea that nothing exists except God, and that humanity is one portion of him — one phase of his Being.36

Thus, Theosophy can also be classified as “antichrist”.

We can see the significance of Peter’s statement, “being put to death in the flesh”.

Ever since the founding of Islam there has always been an underlying tension, some would say an animosity, between the Judeo-Christian and the Muslim cultures. This can be traced to the foundational teachings of their respective “holy” books; the Bible and the Qur’an.

And perhaps this can be further traced to the fact the Qur’an teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross but someone who resembled Him was crucified. The following is a direct quote [accurately translated from Arabic into English] from Surah 4:157-159 of the Qur’an:

31 The name is derived from two Greek words meaning “God wisdom”.
34 In this sense Theosophy teaches universalism—that all religions and beliefs are valid and lead to a knowledge of God and, ultimately, “salvation”; i.e., “nirvana”.
1 Peter Chapter 3

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157 And because of their saying, “We killed Messiah ‘Isa\textsuperscript{37}, son of Maryam\textsuperscript{38}, the Messenger of Allah,”—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but the resemblance of ‘Isa was put over another man\textsuperscript{39}, and those who differ therein are full of doubts. They have no [certain] knowledge, they follow nothing but conjecture. For surely; they killed him not, son of Maryam. 158 But Allah raised him up\textsuperscript{40} unto Himself\textsuperscript{41}. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise. 159 And there is none of the people of Scripture\textsuperscript{42} but must believe in him\textsuperscript{43} before his death. And on the Day of Resurrection, he [‘Isa (Jesus)] will be a witness against them.

Without a real death there could not have been any of Jesus’ blood shed. But the God’s word declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin. Therefore, Muslim theology teaches that our sins are not forgiven by the shedding of Jesus’ blood.

According to the apostle John this teaching from the Qur’an would have to be classified as “antichrist”.

To add insult to injury of the Gospel message, the Qur’an also teaches:

“And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam\textsuperscript{44}, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the losers”.—\textit{Surah 3:85}

We need to be in prayer for the salvation of all those who deny that Jesus Christ died bodily for the sins of the world and was raised from the dead for our justification.

If they haven’t already they need to hear the message of \textbf{John 3:16} that, “\textit{God so loved the world……}” They are lost without Him and unfortunately, and sadly, they will be the ‘losers’ in the end.

It should also be noted that these comments apply to Christ’s \textit{bodily resurrection} as well; which Peter mentions in \textbf{v.21}. Because if Jesus did not actually die on the cross, then there can be no actual bodily resurrection as well. And if that is the case, we are “\textit{still in our sins}” and “\textit{those who have died believing in Christ have perished}” {1 \textbf{Cor. 15:17-18}}. This is discussed in more detail later.

[…..\textit{but made alive by the Spirit,}] Jesus was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit—the same Spirit that makes us spiritually alive in Jesus Christ and gives us Eternal Life!

Jesus Christ……...declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.—\textbf{Rom. 1:4}

And the same Spirit, who indwells all believers, will also raise them up with new, resurrected bodies:

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you—\textbf{Rom. 8:11}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} That is, Jesus.
\item \textsuperscript{38} That is, Mary.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Implies they killed that man.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Implies both in body and soul.
\item \textsuperscript{41} And he is now in the Heavens.
\item \textsuperscript{42} That is, Jews and Christians.
\item \textsuperscript{43} That is believed that Jesus is only a Messenger of Allah and a human being.
\item \textsuperscript{44} \textit{Surah 3:67} actually teaches that Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but was a “true Muslim”.
\end{itemize}
[by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared in which a few, that is, eight souls were saved through water]

These verses present an interesting challenge. Peter talks about “spirits in prison” and they were “formerly disobedient” and he mentions the “Divine patience waiting in the days of Noah”.

Note that Peter will mention “Noah” again in his second letter; 2 Pet. 2:5 in reference to God’s judgment of sin and unrighteousness.

What does this all mean? Are these angelic [i.e., demonic] spirits or are they the spirits of human souls?

Well as usual, if we allow scripture to unravel this for us we can come to a pretty good understanding of what this passage is teaching. We’ll need to do a bit of Bible study to understand what Peter is referring to—and this has important implications for answering questions related to; “Where do the souls of those who have died go?”

The key words in unraveling the “mystery” is answering the question; “What are the words “when” and “while” in v.20 referring to?”

The answers are actually given in the context of the same verse! “When” refers to “the days of Noah” and “while” refers to “the ark was being prepared”; i.e., while it was being built.

The “spirits” then, are referring to the souls who would have been alive in Noah’s day, while he was building the Great Ark. These people, probably numbering in the millions, must have saw and heard the testimony of Noah for the reason of coming judgment {Heb. 11:7}, but they ignored the message.

Obviously, except for Noah and his immediate family [his wife, three sons and their wives] they all perished in the Great Flood {ref. Gen. 7:18-24}. Peter refers to the place their souls went as a “prison”.

The Greek word rendered “prison” emphasizes the aspects of being both “watched” and “guarded”. But what “prison” is Peter talking about?

First, we need to carefully consider that scripture {Heb. 9:27} teaches that; “....it is appointed unto man once to die, then the judgment” [no second chances AFTER death].

Second, we need remember that the Jews had a concept of the place where the souls/spirits of those who died went. This place is rendered “the grave” in English translations, but the Hebrew word is “Sheol”.

Basically, Luke 16:19-31 gives us a glimpse of this place, but many other scriptures bear record to the nature and location of “SHEOL” is [e.g. Matt. 12:40 and Luke 16:23 where it is referred to in Greek as “Hades”].

Some time ago [during our study of Job 7] we did a side-study on “SHEOL” that included a one page diagram describing this subject with associated scripture. Appendix A reproduces this diagram.

SHEOL was considered a place of “captivity” that no one could escape, just like a “prison”:

“As the cloud disappears and vanishes away, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up. He shall never return to his house, nor shall his place know him anymore.”

—Job 7:9-10
“For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun.”—Eccl. 9:5-6

“For Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You; those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.”—Isa. 38:18

Since no one is allowed to come back to earth from Sheol, it is naturally referred to as a prison. This is consistent with Jesus’ teaching. Please refer to Luke 16:19-31.

Note that when Jesus told the repentant thief on the cross “.....today you will be with me in paradise” {Luke 23:43}, He meant the “heart of the earth” {Matt. 12:40}, i.e., Sheol/Hades; the place of comfort where the souls of believers went after they died—so-called “Abraham’s bosom” {see Luke 16:23}. The repentant thief did not need an explanation of what Jesus meant!

These passages of scripture are best understood in light of Eph. 4:7-10.

That passage of scripture describes Jesus, upon His death, descending into the “lower earthly regions”. This is also translatable as “the depths of the earth”. Well that's exactly where the Jews understood Sheol/Hades to be!

Remember that Jesus said He would be three days and nights in the “heart of the earth”—Sheol/Hades! Immediately after His resurrection He was on the earth for 40 days {Acts 1:3} to fellowship with His disciples and teach them more things {John 21:1-25; Acts 1:4-8} until his final ascension to Heaven {Acts 1:9-11}.

In Eph. 4:8 Jesus also led “captivity captive”. What does this mean?

Well I believe it refers to those spirits who were in the “Abraham's bosom” side of Sheol/Hades and saved. For Paul tells us that for a believer to be “absent from the body” (i.e., dead) means to be “present with the Lord” {2 Cor. 5:6-8} who is seated on the “right hand of the Father” {1 Pet. 3:22}.

Therefore, Ephesians 4:7-10 appears to be telling us that Jesus took the souls of all the believers [including Old Testament ones] to heaven with Him during His ascension to await the final resurrection of the “justified” [a.k.a., the FIRST RESURRECTION, Rev. 20:6].

But it should also be noted here, that this means that the place of comfort—the side where the souls of Old Testament believers went before Jesus Christ’s ascension is no longer occupied! And no Christian has ever gone there because we are told

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45 Note; this does not imply "SOUL SLEEP"; where the spirits of those who have died are “unconscious” and experience no sensations. This is actually emphasized in the same passage when Solomon declares; “nevermore will they have a share in anything done under the sun”; which phrase is a euphemism for things done “on the earth”. This understanding is confirmed in Luke 16:22-24 where Jesus tells us that two men who died went to Hades, but went to two separate “sides” of Sheol/Hades {Luke 16:26} [place of torment—unbelievers; place of comfort—believers] and they were conscious of their situation. And in the book of Revelation we read that the souls of those who were martyred for their faith are quite alive and well {ref., Rev. 6:9-11}. What this does mean [consistent with the rest of scripture] is that those who have died are NOT aware anything that is happening back on earth—the domain of the living. Departed loved ones are not floating on a cloud and peering over to see what is happening on earth. The only ones looking down upon us are God and His angels.

46 This was in fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy found in Psalms 68:18.

47 See Matt. 26:64; Acts 2:33; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 5:1, 7.
So v.19 refers to spirits in Sheol, called “Hades” in the Greek, who rejected the righteousness of God, did not believe and are still in the “place of torment” in Sheol/Hades {see Luke 16:19-31}.

Therefore, Peter is talking about spirits who are now in “prison”, i.e., in Sheol/Hades but who formerly heard repentance & salvation preached to them while alive during Noah’s day!

Such pre-incarnate preaching of Christ is not anything new. For example, the idea of a substitutionary death for sin was “preached” through Abraham’s willingness to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God {see Heb. 11:17-19}.

That’s why Peter states (capitalized words emphasize the point) : (1) the preaching was done by the Spirit of God (not Jesus personally), but which was the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, (2) these spirits formerly were disobedient [disobeyed long ago; KJV] and (3) when God waited patiently in Noah’s day while the ark was being prepared [i.e., built].

Genesis indicates that the great Ark was 120 years in the building {Gen. 6:3}. But evidently after all those years of Noah’s testimony [as the Ark was being built] no one was found righteous in their ways except Noah—he “found grace in the eyes of the Lord” {Gen. 6:8}. Noah became a heir of the righteousness which is according to faith 48. So only eight people were saved; Noah, his three sons and their respective wives.

I believe Noah preached God’s judgment for sin [at the very least by his faithfulness in building the ark in anticipation of God’s judgment]. Evidently, Noah preached that men are sinners and needed to repent [perhaps similar to John the Baptist’s message].

In this passage then. I believe that Peter is emphasizing that since Christ died for sins once for all [sounds like Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10 doesn’t it] to bring us to God there is NO OTHER WAY to be saved.

The example Peter uses is the people in Noah’s day that had an opportunity to be brought near to God by listening to Noah and repenting of their sins. They could have been saved—but they refused to obey the message of coming judgment and salvation in the Great Ark.

They refused the long-suffering and grace of God—they were disobedient to the message of salvation in the same sense as those who are “disobedient to the word” {v.1 and 1 Pet. 2:7-8}.

Their spirits are now in “prison”, i.e., in the grave, SHEOL/HADES. And because they were unbelievers, they are on the side of the torment.

People today still do not take the warning about God’s judgment of sin seriously. God is holy and righteous. He does not let sin “slide” and He eventually judges it.

But because He is also loving and just He provided a way to escape death in the days of Noah.

Likewise, God also provides a way to escape “eternal death”—eternal separation from God in Hell {2 Pet. 2:4}, which is also called the Lake of Fire {Rev. 19:20; 20:14-15}. This is of course is accomplished through the blood of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for our sins {Rom. 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10-11}.

God continues to set before mankind a choice: “the way of death and the way of life”. And that “Life” is in the Son, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life! God wants everyone to choose life—but many, because of pride, will not.

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48 Heb. 11:6 tells us; “By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.”
But people still refuse to accept the grace and forgiveness of God offered through Jesus Christ and they will perish [eternally] as those did during the global flood. Peter is making two points related to what happened during Noah’s day. The first is that, similarly to what happened in Noah’s day, believers can have the assurance that the LORD will judge all those who have maliciously rejected the Gospel message by mocking and ridiculing the messengers. And they will acknowledge Jesus Christ as LORD. Note:

For it is written⁴⁹: “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God.”—Rom. 14:11

Peter’s second point is found in the next two verses: The flood waters that destroyed wickedness from off the earth but saved the righteous as a type of “baptism”; also serve as an allegory to a different kind of baptism—a spiritual baptism..........................

vv. 21-22 ➤ The Glory of the Resurrected Christ
[21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism [not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God], through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.]

[There is also an antitype which now saves us] By “antitype” Peter is referring back to his previous statement; “the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared in which a few, that is, eight souls were saved through water”.

So we have Noah and his family who were carried to safety, saved, from the flood waters inside a Great Ark.

Today there is an “antitype” [meaning?] of the waters that flooded the earth in which “eight souls were saved through water”.

related to the Great Flood that destroyed the existing world but in which the 8 righteous people were saved [Noah, his three sons plus their respective wives]. The flood waters were a baptism of sorts in which those who were in the ark survived.

There is an antitype of that “baptism” which now saves us

[baptism] Peter describes the baptism he is referring to: “not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God”. In other words, it’s NOT a baptism of water, it’s a spiritual baptism—a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Note:

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.—1 Cor. 12:13-14

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

—Gal. 3:26-28

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.—Rom. 6:4

⁴⁹ Quoted from Isa. 45:23.
This is the “water” that Jesus was referring to in his famous statement about being “born-again”:

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

—John 3:5-8

And just prior to His ascension:

“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”—Acts 1:55

This event occurred on the so-called “DAY OF PENTECOST”.

So the antitype is NOT about water-cleansing power, but of sin-cleansing power!

This baptism is part of the experience of being “born-again” {ref. John 3:3-7} that Peter refers to earlier in his letter {1 Pet. 1:23}.

[through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.] Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is part of the prerequisite for salvation {Rom. 10:8-9}. It is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and one of the primary truths that separates it and makes it distinct and unique\(^{50}\) from every other religion and belief system in the world!

Peter has previously highlighted the essential importance of this when he told us:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.—1 Pet. 1:3-5

The apostle Paul summarizes just how important this is when he writes:

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.—1 Cor. 15:14-19

This can be applied to what the Qur’an teaches! Please refer back to notes at v.18.

[who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God.] This is a doctrinal truth—Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven {see Acts 1:9-11} and is seated at “the right hand of God”\(^{47}\). This is a theological truth that is non-negotiable.

This means He occupies the position of highest honor and exaltation. See also Psalms 110:1; Heb. 1:13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

And He should for Jesus Christ is both Creator and Savior. Note:

\(^{50}\) The other distinction of the Christian Message, i.e., the Gospel, is that it’s the only belief system that teaches that no one merits salvation based on their own works—forgiveness of sins can’t be earned through religious service. One can ONLY be saved by God’s grace through faith and receive it as a gift; and {Eph. 2:8-9}.
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. —Col. 1:15-18

[angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.] This is the fulfillment of a Messianic prophecy found in Psalms 110:1:

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’.” Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both LORD and Christ.—Acts 2:34-36

The apostle Paul says it this way:

And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.—Eph. 1:19-23

And for this He is to be worshipped:

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things and by Your will they exist and were created.” —Rev. 4:11

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing!.....Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” —Rev. 5:12-13

Because Jesus Christ endured the agony of the cross, suffered and died for our sins He is highly exalted to the point that all angels, authorities and powers are subject to Him. And one day every creature on earth, under the earth and in Heaven will bow their knee and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. Note:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Phil. 2:9-11

Because of this, Christians have an awesome assurance of Christ’s unfailing love!

Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Rom. 8:37-39

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51 See 1 Cor. 15:24-26.
Appendix: Sheol-Hades Overview

Relationship of Hades (Sheol), Abyss, and Tartaros Before & After Jesus Christ's Resurrection.
(Note: This is a Graphical Representation Only)
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