

## **FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER** (Lesson 12) - Pastor Joh. W. Matutis

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### **Concerning the studying**

I **recommend** you to read through the respective book in the bible at first. Our manual is the bible. And then to go through one or two pages of the material every day, which implies to also look up and read the given bible scriptures to become thoroughly acquainted with the subject. Another suggestion would be to use this material as one's regular devotion.

If you would like to **obtain a degree (certificate) at the end of the seminar**, you need to answer the **test questions** at the end of each lesson and send or email it to us with your full name and address. And now I wish you lots of joy and spiritual profit during your bible study.

**Pastor Joh. W. Matutis**

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

The **1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter** addresses Christian churches in Asia Minor who had to deal with a hostile environment.

This letter has a typical **post-Pauline character**. It is an **exhorting epistle**. The main topics are **faith, obedience and patience**.

It addresses the **chosen strangers in the diaspora**. In the beginning this was a usual term for all Jews who lived scattered / in exile, which means outside of their home country. In the beginning this term only referred to the Jews who were scattered among the Gentiles ( Jam. 1,1 ).

Since Peter is also writing his letter to the Gentile Christians (1. Petr. 2,1; 4,39 ) he also includes the Gentiles in the term „strangers“. The Jews as well as the Gentiles lived in an hostile environment that was far away from God. **Also the Christians were scattered**. In Acts it reports that the persecution of the Christians scattered the members of the first church. The scattered ones thus established various churches in different places. The apostles remained in Jerusalem at first (Act.8,1)

It is a letter about the „**alienation of the church**“. The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter is especially characterized by its **broad variety of thoughts**. It is a real letter of **comfort and exhortation** to the church of Jesus.

Almost all countries mentioned in the letter **were churches that were established by Paul personally**. This letter was obviously an Epistle to all the churches in this area. Just like **Peter** brought salvation to the Samaritans and the Gentiles and made use of his authority over the keys of the kingdom, he also served the **churches established by Paul** in Asia Minor with this letter (comp. Mat. 16,17-19 / Luk. 22,31 / Joh. 21,15 -17 ). Jesus assigned the „rock of faith“ Peter for the care of His church.

**Peter took this assignment of being a shepherd very seriously** ( Act. 2,14; 8,14 -17; 10,1 – 47; 11,4 -1 8; 15,7 – 12 ) and also consequently executed it. Therefore he also goes to the churches that Paul established and writes to them in order to encourage them in their faith. Not as a competitor of Paul, but rather an amendment of him. The reason for it was: things of faith have to be confirmed by two or three witnesses ( Mat.18,16 / 2. Cor. 13,1 / 1.Tim. 5,19 ). From church history we know that also the **apostle John continued to minister at the churches that Paul established**. Also all of his Epistles (Rev. 2 – 3 ) are addressing the churches in this area.

**Therefore this letter already presumes the knowledge of Pauline proclamations and theology among the readers of the letter**. The content reflects Pauline thoughts and could be related to the Epistle to Ephesians. Many similarities can be traced back to common tradition, such as **Christological pieces** that emphasise the meaning of Jesus' death for salvation ( 1.Petr. 1,18ff.; 2,21ff.; 3,18ff. ). This also includes the chapters that exhort to submission (comp. especially 1. Petr. 2,13ff. and Rom. 13,1ff. ) or also challenge to illustrate life in the form of virtue and vice catalogues (compare 1.Petr. 4,3 and Rom. 1,28 ).The corresponding combination and alteration of OT quotes that probably relate to mutual tradition of interpretation is remarkable (the form of Is. 28,16 and 8,14 in 1. Petr. 2,6 and Rom. 9,33 ). Besides those similarities there are still enough other things that could be called **typically Pauline** and recur in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter.

**Let us compare the following typical key verses:**

- in Christ ( 1. Petr. 3,16; 5,10,14 ),
- charisma ( 1. Petr. 4,10 ),
- freedom ( 1. Petr. 2,16 ),
- sharing the suffering of Christ ( 1. Petr. 4,13 ),
- revelation ( 1. Petr. 1,7,13; 4,13),
- conscience ( 1. Petr. 2,19 ).

Thus **apostle Peter adds** to the ground that apostle Paul had laid for the churches there. Even though the simple word statistic cannot be a clear implication it is yet remarkable that the term »**grace**« is mentioned not less than **ten times**. This is also a sign and expression that the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter held on to the main point of Paul's messages.

In the foreground of **the term church** 1<sup>st</sup> Peter promotes the the subject "**the people of God**" (Ch. 2 ) in a very casual attitude relating to the subject **people of God** of the old covenant. Even though 1<sup>st</sup> Peter comes close **to many Pauline letters**, so that some topics could even be called „**Pauline**“ because we are familiar with them from Paul's texts, they are really just the mutual foundation of original Christian theology.

Everything that Paul said about '**communion**' for example, he only explained it how he received it from God the creator of heaven and earth. In the end this was nothing new. The first Christians celebrated communion service long before Paul. Paul only received a fresh confirmation from the Holy Spirit.

**It was common for the first Christian** that for everything they received from others, they needed a personal confirmation by the Holy Spirit. They used to say: I conferred not with flesh and blood ( Gal.1,16 - 17 ). Also the **revelation of Peter** that Jesus is the Messiah, he had received by revelation of the Holy Spirit (Mat.16,17).The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter is closely related to **Romans and Ephesians**.

Some guess that 1<sup>st</sup> Peter was not a complete letter in the beginning, but separate texts that were put together later. This applies to 1. Petr. 1,13 – 4,11; which is a baptism speech – maybe a preparation of a baptism or a lesson of faith.

This letter is rather practical and **teaching contribution**.

Next to **charismatic teaching** ( 1. Petr. 4,10ff. ),  
the **common priesthood** ( 1. Petr. 2,5,9 )  
and the **mercies of God** ( 1. Petr. 2,10 )  
also **Ecclesiology** (teaching about the church) is also determined by Pauline Presbyterianism (1. Petr. 5,1ff. ).

Also in **Christology** ( comp. 1. Petr. 2,21 ),  
in **Anthropology** ( comp. Hellenistic-dualistic influence in 1. Petr. 2,11 )  
and in the **Parenesis** ( which means counsel, exhortation ...comp. spiritualisation in 1. Petr. 3,3ff. ) which shows the difference between him and Paul whereas some tensions can be explained by traditions. On the other hand this 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter is sometimes »**more Pauline than Paul himself**“ for example when he teaches the attitude of Christians towards government based on Christian freedom in 1. Petr. 2,16.

Inspite of some mutual traditions with the Pauline Epistles the letter was fed by a broad stream of **ancient Christian traditions** which finds its parallels for example in the letters of Hebrews (comp. parallels between 1. Petr. 1,1,2,23; 2,24; 3,18 u.ö.). The letter is full of remarks and quotes pointing to the Old Testament.

The sender writes under the **name of the renowned apostle Peter** of Babylon (1. Petr. 5,13 ). **Babylon** was used as a pseudonym **of the capital Rome**.

The letter **reflects the threat of the churches** during the first wide-ranging persecution of the Christians in the time of Roman Emperor Dominion ( 81–96 A.D.). The churches suffered from political and social **enmity** and were humiliated by all means. They were mocked and despised. **The letter encourages the Christians to persevere**: Especially in such a difficult situation true faith proves. It is downright **refined like silver in the fire**. It was considered a privilege to be counted to the people of God (1. Petr. 2,9 ) and to obtain spiritual glory by innocent suffering just like the Lord Jesus Christ ( 1. Petr. 2,21 – 25 ). This inner maturing process also requires to give account of your faith with self-awareness ( 1. Petr. 3,15 ).

**The 1<sup>st</sup> book of Peter establishes the theology of martyrdom** in early Christianity. The persecutions were counted a sign of the soon return of Christ ( 1. Petr. 4,7 ). It is important to follow Christ in your own suffering, to carry your cross without complaint or murmuring. It is about enduring your life's destiny with humility and meekness, just the way it is, in order to be saved from the law of guilt and atonement ( 1. Petr. 4,16 – 17 ).

In 1. Petr. 1,3 - 4,11 suffering is **characterised a possible incident**. In 1. Petr. 4,12ff., however, suffering is described as a present reality. But also in 1. Petr. 1,3 - 4,11 it speaks about the experiences of suffering and persecution (1<sup>st</sup> Petr.1 ,6; 2,12; 3,16; 4,1,4 ). In 1<sup>st</sup> Petr. 4,12ff. it explicitly refers to terms concerning the subject »**suffering**«, especially the terminology »**suffering of Christ**« in 1. Petr. 4,13, also 2,21ff. and 3,18ff. This is where the affected Christians are referred to Jesus Christ and the coming heavenly glory that will result out of the consequences of baptism. The future hope of the saints is a central issue of this letter.

**The suffering of Christians is a natural consequence because of their relationship with the rejected Christ**. But in the end all negative experiences of the children of God work for our perfection ( also Rom. 8,28). Here speaks an experienced and mature man of God. He does not only present us with a cold theory of suffering but also speaks of his own painful experiences.

Peter speaks of **coming suffering** ( comp. with 1<sup>st</sup> Petr. 2,14 and 3,13ff. ). He confirms these because of his own experience and explains that we **will still suffer** for Christ inspite of our good works. Peter knows that bad things also happen to righteous and good people. We live in an evil world ( 1. Petr. 1,3 - 4,11 ). When this letter was written the churches experienced great trials and tribulations.

It is not without a reason that we see the word **suffering** so many times, more than in all of the NT Epistles including the Book of Revelation.

Controversial questions that were disputed during Paul's time at the first church are no longer important at this time. This applies to the questions of the law as well as the granted **Gentile Mission**. The case of the kingdom of God had already advanced.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter is to be understood like **an early Christian catechism**. Or it points to the tight relation of early Christian hymns and confessions (comp. 1. Petr. 1,20; 2,21ff.; 3,18ff. ) or to such forms and interpretations that were promoted in the Old Testamental Jewish areas and therefore explain why they seem related to the Epistle of James.

In the Epistle of Peter it is not so much about the ritual of baptism, but rather **the experience of baptism** and the consequences thereof (comp. Rom. 6).

It seems like the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter consists of two different parts. Some theologians even assume this to be a fact. They claim that the first part ( 1. Petr. 1,3 – 4,11 ) was actually independent and was later added to the Epistle. It cannot be denied, however, that both parts of the letter were authored by the same writer.

#### **It is dealing with the same topics such as**

- temptation ( 1. Petr. 1, 6 and 4,12 );
- relation between revelation and glory ( 1. Petr. 1, 7 and 5, 1 );
- future rejoicing with joy ( 1. Petr. 1 ,8 and 4,13 );
- suffering according to the will of God ( 1. Petr. 3,17 and 4,19 );
- beatitudes of thos who suffer ( 1. Petr. 3,14 and 4,14 ).

The verses 11 and 12 ( in 1. Petr. 4 ) form **the interface of both chapters**. In 1. Petr. 4,12ff. Another situation of the addressed church is assumed, just like in the rest of the letter.

**Miscellaneous:** It is remarkable that in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter there is no confirmation or indication that Peter was an eye-witness of Jesus Christ. There is not even a remark that he had a special relationship with Jesus.

Maybe the word of Paul applies that said: „**We do not know Christ according to the flesh but according to the spirit**“ (comp. 2. Cor. 5,16 – 17). In addition Peter had already shared his life story in **the Gospel of Mark** so that he probably didn't think it was necessary to repeat it.

The work of faith had advanced. To **the first Christian believers the historical, Jewish Jesus was not of vital importance for their faith**. Therefore they did not write or speak about the historical events such as the virgin birth, Jesus' mother Mary or that He was a descendant of the house of David. They only preached the risen and glorified Christ who had ascended to heaven.

## **The purpose of the letter**

The letter was obviously written for two purposes:

1.) Many among the Christians wondered **whether Paul and Peter had different doctrines** about the foundational truths of Christian faith. Some assume Peter wrote this letter and sent it to the churches in Asia-Minor that Paul established in order to rebuke false teachings.

2.) The letter was also supposed to **strengthen and encourage the Christian Jews** who had to endure severe tribulations and persecution. This way Peter served in the way that Jesus had instructed him (Luke 22,31 – 32 ).

**The key word of this letter is „suffering“**. This word is mentioned in **21 different forms** in this short letter and reveals the main purpose of the book. Peter is referring to the suffering of **Christ**, which is not mentioned even once in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle of Peter.

**One of the main thought is**, that courageous endurance of tests and suffering are part of Christian life and are normal. This is how we **identify** with Jesus and His suffering as well as His resurrection – and not only experience the symbolic baptism but also make that personal experience. In all this the true believer follows after the example of Jesus ( 1. Petr. 2,21- 25; 3,18; 4,1 ).

Just like Jesus lived, also Christians should prove in patience and long-suffering. They were even supposed to count themselves **blessed** when they had to suffer because of their belief in Jesus Christ throughout their life (1. Petr. 2,19; 3,14; 4,12 – 19; 5,9 ). The cordiality of the letter and his practical advice makes this a unique **source of encouragement** for all believers who **might live in conflict with their cultural surrounding**. It is a counseling letter of a mature father in Christ. His theology is concentrated solely on comfort and exhortation of the believer in their daily needs.

## **Author**

The author of the letter calls himself: „**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ**“ ( 1. Petr. 1,1 ). He uses the greek translation of the Aramaic name **Cephas** ( Mt. 16,18 ). He obtained his honorific name "rock" - **Simeon** ( Act. 15,14; 2. Petr. 1,1 ) or **Simon** ( Mk. 1,16 ) as the first witness of resurrection (1. Cor. 15,5 / Luk. 24,34 ) probably from the resurrected himself. The answers to that vary in Mark. 3,16 / Mat. 16,17ff. and in Joh. 1,42 . Interestingly he is the only person in the New Testament who carried the name "**Petrus**".

**We probably see a changed Peter here**. The image of Peter, that the gospels suggest vary in their display of Peter compared to the Peter we see in his letters. We encounter a matured and transfigured Peter.

He was changed **by the limitless grace of God**. In the gospels we see a „**sanguine Peter**“ who is hot tempered, courageous, a little careless and quickly prepared to take revenge. He was also ambitious when it came to earthly power. His personal, strong change of character for the good is also an encouragement for us. We see a mature man who is patient, quiet, long-suffering and loving and whose carelessness and cockiness had been purged and refined. This wonderful example of the power of God's grace. ( 1. Pet 1,7,19; 2,4,6,7; 3,4 / 2. Pet 1,1,4 ).

„**Hope**“ another favorite term of this letter ( 1. Petr. 1,3,13,21; 3,15 ).

Every apostle has a special message:

- Paul was called the "apostle of faith",
- John the "apostle of love" and
- Peter the "apostle of hope".

The name "**Peter**" is a reminder that, this man was, according to the gospels, the book of Acts and Gal. 1,18 the speaker of the twelve and later one of the »**three pillars**« of the first church ( Gal. 2,9). It reminds us how he became the rock of the church.

Peter puts strong **emphasis on**:

- **election** ( 1. Petr. 1, 2 );
- **foreordination** of God ( 1. Petr. 1,20);
- **trinity** (1. Petr. 1, 2);
- the **sustitutional sacrificial death of Jesus** ( 1. Petr. 1, 2,18,19; 2,21,24; 3,18 ; 4,1 ).

All in all we could say that Peter was a very teachable scholar of Jesus. He never forgot what he had learned and faithfully recalls it in this letter:

- in 1. Petr. 1,17 ...he mentions what he learned in Acts 10,15,3;
- in 1. Petr. 2, 4 – 8 ...he says what he heard in Mt. 16,18;
- in 1. Petr. 2,25 ...he recalls what he learned in Joh. 10,1;
- in 1. Petr. 4,19 ...what he learned in Luke 23,46 ;
- in 1. Petr. 5, 2 ...in Joh. 21,15,17;
- in 1. Petr. 5, 5 ...in Joh. 13,4,5.

He counted himself **born again** (1. Petr. 1,3 ) and is „**elder**“ and „**witness**“ of the suffering of Christ (1. Petr. 5,1 ). Let us only think of the denial of Jesus, the experience of His resurrection, etc.

The letter was however **not written by the hand of Peter**, but like he said himself by his co-worker **Silvanus**: «By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you I have written briefly» ( 1. Petr. 5,12 ). This is surely also an explanation that the letter was written in a remarkably good Greek which denies the authorship of the simple Galilean fisherman Simon.

About the person and the ministry of Peter the gospels and the book of Acts give a relatively solid report. Only about the end of the life of the apostle we do not know too much except the prophecy of Joh. 21,18 where it speaks of a **martyrdom**. This translation confirms that Peter died as a martyr under Nero in Rome during the year of 67 AD (?). Clemens of Rome reminds us in a letter to the Corinthians (circa 94 AD) of the death of the apostle. Other church fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch, Papias and Clemens of Alexandria also gave the same report.

But it is strange that none of them mentions **Peter as bishop of Rome**. According to Irenaeus **Linus** was the first bishop of Rome. It was not until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century until they started to insist on the apostolic Roman office as a bishop. The biblical and ecclesiastical testimonies leave no doubt that the **apostle Peter** was the author of this letter.

This letter was written **by Peter towards the end of his life** (60 AD) while he was residing in „**Babylonia**“ (1. Petr. 5,13 ), where a Christian church was established. It is unlikely that it referred to the historical **Babylonia** which still existed at the time of the book of Acts but was practically meaningless. It should rather be assumed that Peter used the name of Babylon as Apocalyptic image of **Rome**. „Babylonia“ was the contemporary code name of the Empire Rome (comp. Rev. 14,8; 16,19; 17,5; 18,2 – 3 ).

Thus we must assume that the author wrote and sent his letter from Rome. There is enough evidence for the fact that Babylonia in 1. Petr. 5,13 **is the secret name for Rome**. In analogy to the profane **Babel of the Old Testament** (comp. Is. 13; 43,14 / Jer. 50ff. ) it became the apocalyptic code name of the Empire's capital (Rev. 14,8; 16 – 18 ). It exposes Rome's wickedness and points to it's desolate state and the coming divine judgment. The „**Babylonia**“ that Peter referred to can hardly be the old Babylonia of Mesopotamia. The term Babylonia really seemed to be **the apocalyptic term for Rome** (Rev. 14,8; 6,19; 17, 5; 18, 2,10, 21 ) or a code name for another place, which is supported by Eusebius and Papias.

The metaphorical comparison of "**Babylonia**" with "**Rome**" can be found since Rome overtook Israel especially under the influence of the **zealots** (bitter Jewish rebels). Israel was occupied at that time and a war was about to break out. Since the Christian churches also worked in the underground they used similar fake names and had to be very careful. Especially because some of the disciples of Jesus were also zealots (Luk. 6,15 / Mark. 3,18 / Mat.10,4 ).

**That Rome was the place where this Epistle was written** can be supported **by the remark of Mark** in 1. Petr. 5,13 ( com. 2. Tim. 4,11 with 1. Petr. 1,17 ). But it is possible that this assumption was made because Peter supposedly spent the last time of his life in Rome. The letter was brought by **Silvanus** ( 1. Petr. 5,12 ). Since Silvanus (Latin name) was mentioned together with Mark we can assume that it is the companion of Paul Silas (Greek name). When Paul was in prison, Silas was free and able to do the work.

Now we only know about **Silvanus** (in Acts = **Silas**) that he was supposed to be the messenger of the Apostle Decree (Acts 15, 22,27,32 ), and that he proclaimed the gospel with Paul and Timothy during the so called 2<sup>nd</sup> mission journey ( Act. 15,40; 2. Cor. 1,19 ) and according to Acts 15,22 came from the first church of Jerusalem.

It is assumed that Peter gave **Silvanus** the themes and frame of the content of the message, but that expression and writing except for the final words in 1. Petr. 5,12ff., was up to Silvanus. This would explain why this Epistle was written in such good Greek.

Paul is addressing **mainly, but not exclusively** the **Hebrew Christians** (Jews 1. Petr. 1,1 – and Gentiles 1. Petr. 2,9,10 ). The numerous **terminologies of the OT** definitely address the Jewish readers, but there are also many statements that definitely address readers with a Gentile background (i.e. 1. Petr. 1,8 ). Also the sins referred to in 1. Petr. 4,3 are typical Gentile sins.

**We know from this letter**, that the readers **were persecuted for their faith** ( 1. Petr.1,6; 3,13 – 17; 4,12 -19; 5,9 ). Those were not persecutions ordered by law or government, those were rather **every day tribulations** that Christians of the 1<sup>st</sup> century had to face. This included **abuses** ( 1. Petr. 4,4,14 ) and **defamation as transgressors** (1. Petr. 2,12; 3,16 ). Also **beatings** ( 1. Petr. 2,20 ), **social outlawry** and other **assaults** of the local crowd belonged to it. Peter wrote this letter in order to encourage the persecuted and intimidated believers to stay persistent in their faith ( 1. Petr. 5,12 ). Therefore he repeats the thought of the **eternal reward of faith** ( 1. Petr. 1,3 – 13; 4,13; 5,14 ).

## **RECIPIENTS**

The author calls the recipients **the Christians in the diaspora**. Also 5 provinces are named ( 1. Petr. 1,1), that practically display all of Asia-Minor.

Where exactly the recipients can be found is not quite sure. **Pontus, Galatia, Kappadocea, Asia and Bithynia** ( 1. Petr. 1,1 ) were probably Roman names of provinces. As the strange order of names suggests, the author is not **well informed about the geography of Asia Minor**.

This letter **sounds like a circular letter** that was supposed to be passed from church to church. The 1. Epistle of Peter belonged to a group of 7 NT Epistles that are called the „ **Catholic Epistles**“ :

- the two Epistles of Peter,
- the three Epistles of John,
- the Epistle of James and
- the Epistle of Jude.

„**Catholic Epistle**“ does not refer to the Roman Catholic church, but rather means „**general**“. It means that these Epistles were not addressing a certain church but were rather dedicated to the whole church of Jesus Christ.

**The addressees** were suspected and rejected and even accused just because they were Christians. They were also brought before court without any notice of how far the general hate against Christians had developed already.

The author seems to be eager **to avoid unnecessary confrontation and provocation** in order not to give the Gentiles **any reason** for their accusations. We cannot assume a state organised persecution, but rather a hostile surrounding.

Because of the lifestyle of the Christians a social alienation had developed. This did not only lead to private discrimination and harassment, but also to criminalisation. That the accusations were picked up by the authorities effected a dangerous aggravation of the situation which was no longer only a local problem.

What the author says about the past ( 1. Petr. 1,14,18; 2,9; 4,39 ), suggests that a main group of the recipients were Gentiles before conversion.

The author calls them ( 1. Petr. 1, 1 ): „**To the strangers scattered throughout...**“ - in the diaspora. The Greek word «**diaspora**» could also lead us to think it addresses Christians of Jewish background. Among the named Roman provinces there were many Jewish colonies.

But Peter was not addressing „unbelieving Jews“ but rather a **church in the diaspora who believe in Jesus Christ**, who does not have an steady home (1. Petr. 2,11 ).

## **Time and purpose of composition**

This letter implies a broad spreading of the Gospel in Asia Minor (1. Petr. 1,1 ) and also a certain persistence of the churches (1. Petr. 5,1 – 5 ). This must have been after the mission journeys of Paul, since Paul is assumed the spiritual father of those churches. The latest time limit would be the bloody persecutions under Nero, which started in the year AD 64. But this letter does not mention those terrible persecutions. According to all biblical and theological indications this letter must have been written in Rome in the years between AD 62 - 64.

**The trigger of this letter** must have been the oppression and the danger that the Christian churches were facing in their Gentile and hostile environment ( 1. Petr. 2,12 – 20; 3,14 – 17; 4, 4,12 ). Based on this situation the Christians were threatened in such a way that they were tempted to either rebel with violence or surrender and make compromises.

The **purpose of the Epistle** is therefore to comfort and encourage **the oppressed**. His intention was to strengthen their faith, give them new hope and encourage them to remain obedient and patient.

The apostle does this in a very emphatic way by proving that every Christian is called to spiritual salvation (1. Petr. 1, 3 – 2,10 ), so that his daily lifestyle should be characterised in every way by humility, meekness and obedience ( 1. Petr. 2,11 – 3,12 ) and that **suffering leads to our perfection** ( 1. Petr. 3,13 – 5,11 ).

This **glorious salvation** that we received by the grace and mercy of God enables us to be blessed and strengthened **by suffering and tribulations with unspeakable hope and joy**. The heavier and harder the tests that we have to go through the greater God's grace is at work within us. In order for us to suffer innocently for the honor of God we need to be sanctified, patient and have a consistent personal relationship to our creator, Lord and Jesus.

When we suffer and consciously take on the burden of life we automatically have fellowship with our Lord ( 1. Petr. 4,13 ). Spiritually we partake in Jesus suffering through **baptism** and **discipleship** ( 2. Cor. 1,5,7, / Phil. 3,10 ). This is how we share as children in the portion of His glory (comp. 1. Petr. 1,11; 5,11 / Rom. 8,17 / 2. Cor .4,17 / Phil. 3,11 ).

In all Jesus Christ is the almighty redeemer, powerful saviour and victorious overcomer of suffering. Only few Epistles have such a comforting and encouraging message for today.

## **CONTENT AND ARRANGEMENT**

Even though the letter does not seem to be written according to a certain structure we can still see an arrangements of thoughts:

<b>Introduction:</b> Blessings	Ch. 1, 1 - 2
<b>1. The hope of the Christians...</b>	Ch. 1, 3 - 12
The glory of the hope of salvation.	Ch. 1, 3 - 5
The test of faith	Ch. 1 6 - 9
The testimony of the prophets	Ch 1, 10 - 12
<b>2. The calling of the Christian...</b>	Ch. 1, 13 - 2,10
Walks in sanctification.	Ch. 1, 13 - 16
Holds on to salvation.	Ch. 1, 17 - 21
Remains in brotherly love.	Ch. 1, 22 - 25
Become living stones.	Ch. 2, 1 – 10

<b>3. The attitude of a Christian...</b>	Ch. 2, 11 - 3, 22
...toward the Gentiles	Ch. 2, 11 - 12
...toward authority.	Ch. 2, 13 - 17
...toward masters.	Ch. 2, 18 - 25
...toward spouses.	Ch. 3, 1 - 7
...toward all believers.	Ch. 3, 8 - 22

<b>4. The church of Jesus Christ...</b>	Ch. 4, 1 - 5,11
Fellowship of the members.	Ch. 4, 1 - 11
Fellowship in suffering.	Ch. 4, 12 - 19
Exhortation of the elders.	Ch. 5, 1 - 4
Exhortation of the younger.	Ch. 5, 5 - 11
and all the church members	

**Ending:** Greetings and blessings Ch. 5, 12 - 14

**Keyword:** suffering

**keyverse:** *„Rejoice that you can suffer with Christ, that you may also partake in the revelation of His glory, joy and goodness!“*

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Jesus Christ in the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter**

His perfection.	Ch. 1, 9; 2, 22
His eternal purpose.	Ch. 1, 20 / comp. Eph. 3, 11
His „revelation“ (First coming).	Ch. 1, 20 / comp. 2. Tim. 1, 10
His death.	Ch. 2, 24
His resurrection.	Ch. 1, 3; 21, 7, 3,18, 21
His decent into Hades.	Ch. 3, 19 - 20
His ascension to heaven.	Ch. 3, 22
His return.	Ch. 1, 7;13; 4,13; 5, 4
His judgment.	

### **Images of Jesus**

An innocent and perfect lamb.	Ch. 1, 19
A living rock.	Ch. 2, 4
The rejected corner stone and stumbling block.	Ch. 2, 7 - 8
The shepherd and priest of our souls.	Ch. 2, 25
Chief shepherd.	Ch. 5, 4

### **Names of God**

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.	Ch. 1, 3
The Lord.	Ch. 1, 25
The faithful creator.	Ch. 4, 19
The God of all grace.	Ch. 5, 10

### **Images of Christians**

Obedient and newborn children.	Ch. 1, 14; 2,2
Living stones.	Ch. 2, 5
Strangers and pilgrims.	Ch. 2, 11
Free and servants of God.	Ch. 2, 16
Stewards of God's grace.	Ch. 4, 10

### **Images of the church**

A spiritual house.	Ch. 2, 5
A holy and royal priesthood.	Ch. 2, 5,9
A chosen people.	Ch. 2, 9
A chosen generations.	Ch. 2, 9
People of God.	Ch. 2, 10
The flock of Christ.	Ch. 5, 2



## Detailed interpretation

**(1. Petr. 1,1) To live as strangers.** Every man actually lives as a stranger ( 1. Petr. 1,17 / 2. Cor. 5,1 – 8 ) in this material world ( Lev. 25,23 ). He only lives here temporarily and one day has to leave anyway ( Ps. 39,13; 119,19 / 1.Chron. 29,10 – 15 ). Because the true home of man is the spiritual heaven( Phil. 3,20 / Col. 3,1- 4 / Hebr. 11,8 - 16 ; 13,14 ) or even better „the presence of God“ ( Rev. 21,22 – 22,5 ).

**The believer lives between two worlds** between this life and hereafter. Peter introduces himself as an apostle, a messenger. He also performs as such. The strangers are soaked in the blood of Jesus. „**strangers**“ of the N.T. are the Non-Israelites ( Luk. 17,18 / Act.10,28 / Luk. 2,18 – also see Eph. 2,19 ).

**The stranger** is strange to the world, an outlaw and without justice since he belongs to a different world and a different system through faith in God. Peter was persecuted early because of his faith in Jesus Christ and therefore had to suffer much ( comp. Act. 5,17 – 18 ).

We are **sanctified four times**:

1. Before we convert ( 1. Petr. 1,2 ). The Holy Spirit sets us apart. We chosen by God before we convert. It happened before the foundation of the earth.
2. Then when we convert and become born-again ( Tit. 3 / 1. Cor. 6,11 ).
3. Baptism is an act of obedience ( Acts. 5,3 2/ 1. Petr. 1,14 ).
4. **After conversion as Christians in our daily life. This is a process that will end in perfection ( 1. Joh. 3,11 ).**

**( 1. Petr. 1,1 ) „Petrus“ introduces himself as author of the Epistle.** In 1. Petr. 5,1 he calls himself author „elder and witness of the suffering of Christi“. He writes the letter through „**Silvanus**“ ( 1. Petr. 5,12 ) and calls Mark his „son“ ( 1. Petr. 5,13 ). Mark was the interpreter of Peter.

**The addressees all lived in the provinces of Asia Minor.** Also for them the word of God concerning the diaspora came true ( Deut 4,27 ; 28;64 ). This will be the case until the last days. God only confesses Israel in the diaspora, which is the divine purpose after they rejected the Lord Jesus.

**( 1. Petr. 1,1- 2 )** Here Peter draws a line from creation till perfection. The center of his thoughts is the „**cross**“ which is expressed **in all kinds of suffering**.

**( 1. Petr. 1,2,3 ) This is a letter ( 1. Petr. ) to the chosen ones of God.** His introductory words – „**chosen**“ (also 1. Petr. 2,6 ) are already comforting words.

**Election is part of redemption.** We are not redeemed by our own efforts, but by election of God. It is not our own effort but the grace of God.

**Our divine election** is something more than a passive „**determination**“, but means much more being cared about. It is a „being chosen“. God is watching his chosen ones. The same term is also used for Jesus in 1. Petr. 1,20 who was chosen before creation. The Father did not only know the future of His Son, but He also knew Him. He trusted Him and His work. Just as the divine Father chose Jesus Christ, He also chose all who believe in Jesus Christ. We were saved for grace and not for our own rewards. It was only Jesus who paid the price.

**In the beginning God only wanted to chose the people of Israel.** Only they could call themselves the chosen and use this **title** and hold on to it. They were supposed to be holy and serve God ( Lev.19,2 ). All throughout history they failed ( Mat. 23,37 - 38 / 1. Kin. 19,14 / Jer. 26,2 - 23 / 2. Chron. 24,20 - 22 / 1. Thes. 2,15 / Act. 7,52 / Hebr.11,37 ). Finally God chose Jesus and now the Jews were no longer the only chosen. Not even toward His only Son the Jews acted like the chosen ones. Since they did not live worthy of their election, God left the house of Israel ( Mat. 23,38 ) and offered it up to desolation. And on this „**figtree**“ (which is a metaphor of Israel) there would not grow another fruit ( Mat. 21,19 / Jer.18,1 – 12 ).

Ever since the refection of Israel God did not confess Israel any longer and did not watch them like the apple of His eye:

- He did not protect the temple.
- He did not protect Jerusalem.
- He allowed the Jews to be brought into exile.
- He allowed the nation to be destroyed.

Only the land of Canaan (Palestine) was left to God, but even this turned to a desert. He did not even bless the land anymore. The Jews were driven out just like the Canaanites once were. Everywhere in the world they are now **STRANGERS** and have become like any other nation before God. They have become „**strangers**“ to God and now have to come to Him the same way like everybody else. For them there is no longer an exception and no „Jewish way of salvation“. From this point on Jesus is the only way to God for all without exclusion.

**Strangers** are also all Christians whose home is heaven ( Phil. 3,20 ). They are living as pilgrims in a world full of Gentiles. As if this was a temporary exile their thoughts are always centered around their heavenly home.

**The recipients of the letter were „chosen“.** „God Father“ chose them according to the law of divine grace (Rom. 8,28,29 ). They did not become believers out of their own strength but according to the eternal order of God. The author wants to say that we cannot get to heaven by our own strength or our own faith, but it happens by „**election of God**“. The free will of a man or his efforts DO NOT apply, the only thing that counts is the purpose of God. They were predestined by God to live under the sanctification of the Holy Spirit ( 1. Thes. 4,7 / 2. Thes. 2,13,14 ). That's what God called and chose them for, to stand out from the other people and allow God to use them, just like John the Baptist did. Therefore they were all „**sanctified by the spirit**“. This happened by prophetic determination concerning their life ( Mat. 1,21,25 / Luk. 1,13,60,63 / Judg. 13,3 - 5 / Act. 9,15 / Rom. 1,1 / Gal. 1,15 / Act. 13,2 ). And then their calling was prepared leading in that direction just like with Moses, Simson, Gideon, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul and many others.

The **election is not by force** but by the salvation of God. Election happens by trials, tribulations, purging, etc. ( Is. 48,10 ) or by separation (Numb. 16,5,7; 17,5 / 1. Tim. 5,9 ). Children of God are precious in the sight of God when the world despises them.

**A person becomes an elect of God through conversion.** From this moment on the whole „**package of salvation**“ of God is available for him. A gift that reaches back to eternity before the foundation of this earth ( Eph. 1,4 ) as well as the glory of God.

**This has serious effects upon his life on earth.** After his conversion the believer is supposed to execute the will of God here on earth and to realise His divine counsel as well as to reach and live His calling. **Our free and conscious decision** for God activates God's divine „**original plan**“ for our life. This includes everything that He planned with His wisdom, which exceeds all human thoughts and imaginations. Therefore it is natural that this interaction of God with us will cause contradiction and resistance in our surrounding. God delivers us from the hand of Satan just like He once delivered the children of Israel from the hand of Pharaoh who did not want to let them go. The good Father of life, love and light chose us from eternity and loved us ever since. His spirit has sanctified us through His son Jesus Christ to free obedience through the power of His holy sacrificial blood of Golgotha ( 1. Petr. 1, 3 – 2 ).

**This is where the trinity works on our salvation:**

- The **Father** through His free grace and eternal election is the original source of salvation (of the Father - Vers 3 – 5 )
- The **Son** of God is the source of the washing of our sins through His blood (of the Son - Vers 6 – 9 )
- The **Holy Spirit** gives our soul the new birth and the holy, everlasting and true life of the spirit (of the Spirit - Vers 10 - 12 )

( **1. Petr. 1,2** ) This is referring to a scene of the covenant with Israel (Ex. 24,6 - 8 ). The people promised to keep the commandments ( 1. Petr. 1,7 ). And just like Moses sprinkled the sacrificial blood over the people and sealed the covenant ( 1. Petr. 1,8 ) Jesus also did that with His own precious blood (Hebr. 9,18 / Mat. 26,28 ). Peter is referring to this covenant. An image from the OT: After a sacrificial animal died everything was sprinkled with the blood as a sign of life and was thereby sanctified (comp. Ex. 24,6 / Lev. 14,7 / Numb. 19,18 ). Only after the „**sprinkling**“ of the blood of life the Israelites were sanctified before God and were given to the free obedience by love. They were justified before the judgment of God. Only after this symbolic sprinkling of blood they were pronounced washed and forgiven of sin.

After the „**sprinkling**“ the believers will go into obedience of faith.

Instead of the righteous judgment of God believers can now go to healing **ministry of God**.

The „elect“ are chosen by the Holy Spirit **and set apart for the service of God** to manifest the will of God. But only by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial blood of Jesus we are cleansed on the inside of the dirt of sin and our hardened hearts become obedient and willing to submit to God freely in the future (Ex. 24,7 / Rom.1,5; 15,18; 16,26 ).

This „**sprinkling**“ is the requirement for reconciliation with God and the foundation for every further spiritual activity for Him. The one who is sanctified by God and daily cleansed of his sin is therewith separated from the world (1. Joh. 1,7,9 ). The „sprinkling“ reminds us of the priestly ministry in the meeting tent of the OT (Lev. 7,14; 14,7,16,51; 16,14 -1 5 / Hebr. 9,13; 12,24 ). Sprinkled were only those who offered a sacrifice and were obedient. The only time where people were sprinkled with blood was at the foundation of the mosaic covenant( Ex. 24,8 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,2** ) With these words Peter lays the theological foundatoin for his counseling letter:

- **God Father** Himself chose the ones who receive it.
- The **spirit** is the transformer. The Holy Spirit works the effects of the blood of Jesus.
- All triune persons of the Godhead are mentioned in this verse.
- 

Peter wishes the recipients that they would receive the goodness of grace and peace of God in abundance, fullness and overflow (also in 2. Petr. 1,2 ).

**The grace of God was very important to the apostle Peter. He mentions it ten times** ( 1. Petr. 1,2,10,13; 2,19–20; 3,7; 4,10; 5,5,10,12 ). He himself had experienced the grace and great love of God.

( **1. Petr. 1,2** ) **Those who live scattered according to the salvation plan of God**... Israel was supposed to be scattered among the nations in order to bring salvation and the blessings of God wherever the went. But since Israel failed to do that the Christians were supposed to do that instead. They are supposed to go wherever needed in order to teach obedience to Christ and also to encourage people and to show them the meaning of all things (Mark.16,15 - 20 / Mat. 28,18 – 20 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,3 – 12** ) **He gave us new birth**. New birth is an act of God. God is the only true creator of all life. He created Adam ( Luk. 3,38 ) and is the Father of Adam through creation ( Ps. 139,13 ). God gave life to man two times. It was an act of mercy.

**Rebirth** is therefore a divine necessity in the foundational frame of order, will, wisdom and purpose of God. There is no other way we can enter into the kingdom of God. We become born-again in order to become heirs of the inheritance. It is about the inheritance that belonged to us before the fall. This inheritance Jesus reclaimed for us. The spiritual rebirth makes us worthy heirs of this divine inheritance. The fullness thereof still lies in the future. It is a prospective. A promise. The inheritance is also called a ransom.

**It is an everlasting, spotless eternal inheritance**. This inheritance cannot be taken from us. It is secured for us (comp. Mat. 6,19 – 20 ). It is not subject to vanity and no stranger can destroy it. Not even Satan can. It is an eternally blossoming beauty.

**The „crown of glory“ does not wither** ( 1. Petr. 5,4 ). Our divine portion is unique. It cannot be taken away or destroyed. This precious treasure from heaven will never decrease. It belongs to us throughout eternity. The inheritance is also not spotted with unrighteousness or the like. It came to us in a real and honest way. It was not stolen but freely given to us by the deep love of Jesus. This inheritance is treasure for us in heaven. We will obtain the inheritance when we enter the highest heaven. It is already prepared and waiting for us ( Mat.2 / Joh. 4,1 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,3 – 4** ) **Only by spiritual rebirth**, a holy new birth can a man come back to God in heaven ( Joh. 3,3 – 6). **In this new birth we are created by the Holy Spirit**. The divine is planted into us. It gives us divine „genes“ and therewith a share in the pure and divine nature ( 2. Petr. 1,4 ). A born-again physically stays as he was, but now partly consists of divine essence. This leads to a change in our disposition.

**Peter spoke to the scattered and suffering children of God:** *"Be comforted, you were chosen and born again to a living hope."* Not based on personal will or decision but based on a divine process of the recreation you become a Christian.

**This great new birth** is a mighty act of grace for the benefit of our perfect restoration as a true image of God (comp. Eph. 4,24 ). A man is born again by the highest mercy of God because otherwise he would have to remain in his self-willed weakness and condition of spiritual death ( 1. Petr. 1,3 / Eph. 2,2 ).

God's mercy is the crown of His love. The rebirth is actually really some kind of „**raising from the death**“ ( Eph. 2,2 ). Just like a dead person cannot do anything to revive himself, a sinner cannot do anything for his own rebirth of soul and spirit.

**Wherefore are we now born again**“? Peter explains the great purpose of rebirth of the spirit. He wrote: *"you were born again **to** a living hope, **to** an eternal and spotless inheritance that is treasured for us in heaven."*

The „**new birth**“ also has a higher calling and purpose. A Christian is born again to **living hope**. This is his fresh nature and way of living. A dead hope would be if you tried to prove worthy before God by your own strength, hoping that all the good things we think we did will please Him and suffice. But all the good and true things come from the giver of all good gifts. All good things are divine goods. When we have done all we could before God this still does not count. To understand and acknowledge that is humility.

The full living hope is not based on what we do, good works and behavior, but is based on righteousness and the perfect, holy life that Christ lived in the presence of His Father. His holy and healing life is the highest gift and he imparts all of that into us when we perfectly trust Him, acknowledge Him and love Him more than anything in this world.

**Peter also gives us a second purpose**. We are also born again in order to receive our eternal and spotless inheritance. This means that by rebirth we receive the required power for a life that pleases God which empowers us to also receive our heavenly inheritance which is stored up in heaven: *"But if we are the children of God we are also heirs, which is heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ (Rom. 8,17 )."*

Peter also speaks of the **means that God uses to give new birth to a person**. He says that *it happens by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*". The new birth in the spirit only happens by the wonderful power of the Holy Spirit. Peter also wants to express that the rebirth happens by the same divine power that also raised Jesus from the dead. This is how we can know what a mighty work of God the rebirth is. It is equal to the resurrection of Christ. The new birth, just like the resurrection of the Lord, is life through death.

But Peter also mentions another means that God uses for the rebirth of a person in this chapter. *"For you are born again not by perishable but eternal seed **through the living word of God** which stands for eternity" ( 1. Petrus 1,23 ).* Just like God used His mighty word for the creative work of His creation ( Gen. 1,3 ) or like Jesus used His word to raise Lazarus from the dead ( Joh.11,43 ). **God's words** are creative, alive, almighty, powerful and great ( Mat. 8,5 / Luk. 5,5 / Joh. 6,63 / Hebr. 4,12 / Eph. 6,17 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,3,4** ) **The return of Jesus** in the form of **His resurrection** from the kingdom of the „spiritual dead“ brought unto us the highest hope. A joy of hope for a new, pure and perfect life out of a new, indestructible inheritance that waits for us in the heavenly spheres of love, light and life. According to in **1. Petr. 1,3** God birthed us again based on His great mercy and therefore opened the door for us to come back into His presence.

**Baptism** aims at »living hope« ( 1. Petr. 1,3 ). To the author of the letter constitutes faith with hope ( 1. Petr. 1,21; 3,15 u.ö.). Also the paranesis (counsel, exhortation) is influenced by eschatology (doctrine of hope) ( 1. Petr. 4,7ff. u.ö.). The content encourages the expectation of the perfection of faith and a radical soberness and disillusion ( 1. Petr. 1,13; 4,7 ). The foreignness toward the exterior, material world (compare the scriptures 1. Petr. 2,11 and also 1. Petr. 1,1,17 ) where the people of God are pilgrims did not result in emigration or isolation but rather perseverance in the daily reality of society ( 1. Petr. 2,11 – 3,7 ). The missionary responsibility ( 1. Petr. 3,1ff. ) and the motive of considering the judgment of unbelievers ( 1. Petr. 2,12; 3,16 ) plays an important role, even though the knowledge about the breach with habits and the past is not denied ( 1. Petr. 1,14,18; 4,4 u.ä.).

## Reflections on „baptism“

**The baptism is described as a covenant of good conscience before God**. Similar to Noah's building of the arch it was the right action out of God-loving obedience, also baptism is an act of obedience (1.Pet. 3,20 ). The baptism is a radical turn from all dead works and perfect repentance unto the living God (Hebr. 6,1 - 3 / Mat. 3,11; 18,19 / Mark. 1,4 / Joh. 4,1 / Act. 1,5 / Hebr. 9,10 ).

„**Dead works**“ are perishable, vain deeds because they are without faith, without Jesus and His divine work of salvation. Those are vain works without the Holy Spirit which are not required, ordered or desired by God. Those are all fakes, or imitations of God's true assignments. Baptism is a divine „**polity**“, which means it is a religious change of power. You give up your old religion and thinking. This refers to Judaism, Paganism and all other beliefs.

**Baptism is the completion of conversion** and is the first step of discipleship. It is a strong symbol for the visible and invisible world. It is a sign for the readiness to die with Jesus and to give up your old life once and for all. It is the expression of faith in the new life, the life of resurrection through God. Baptism, just like marriage, is a covenant between people and God. Through baptism a man receives a new identity. He is being adopted by God and therewith becomes a son or daughter of God.

**If someone is consciously being baptised by immersion**, he enters into a contract with God which, like any other contract, contains rights, privileges and requirements. There are legal differences before and after baptism. The baptised person is under protection of God. He has the same assignment like Jesus and is called by God. In the baptism the baptisand enters into a commitment with duties and has become a part of the body of Christ. He becomes a member of the world-wide church of Jesus ( 1. Cor. 12,13 / Act. 2,41 ) and is no longer under the law but under the pure grace of God.

„**Baptism and baptising**“: The word „baptism“ is mentioned 20 times and „baptising“ 78 times in the NT. It means to „immerse, bathe or dye“. This word is a term of handicraft and was **used by the dyers** to describe the process of dyeing.

The baptism is an inner process of the washing of all sins (Act. 2,38 / Act. 22,16 / 1. Petr. 3,20ff. ).

**You do not become a „child of God“ simply by the exterior act of baptism.**

Before the baptism there are intense processes of repentance and change of mind and faith. You have to convert to Jesus with zealous love, understand salvation and the testimony of assurance of salvation before you decide to be baptised (Act. 9,17 ).

**Some examples** in the bible are: the chamberlain who believed long before baptism (Act. 8,38 ), Cornelius (Act. 10,44 – 48 ) and the jailor (Act. 16,33 ), and many other had already „heard“ the word before they were baptised (Act. 2,41 ). Baptism is therefore more than just the symbolical washing away of sin because only the holy blood of Jesus Christ alone can truly wash away our sins (1. Joh. 1,7).

The blessed baptisand receives divine assurance and forgiveness of sins. The baptisand confesses: I am washed from sins by the blood of Christ. „I will be careful not to sin again“. The baptism is the burial of the old man (Rom. 6,1 – 11 / Col. 2,8 – 13 ).

**Baptism is a „covenant“ that includes all blessings of redemption:** The blessings of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Israel and Jesus. With this new covenant the captivity, diaspora, sin and reign of satan ends ( 2. Cor. 9, 8- 10 / Phil. 4,19 ). We are therewith blessed citizens, co-inhabitants and true children of our heavenly Father, God and Creator for all times and eternity in growing joy of salvation ( Eph. 2,19 ).

( **1.Petr. 1,5,6** ) The salvation that God has prepared for His children is protected by Him as a treasure. In the end of the period of time that God determined for salvation and redemption all who belong to God will receive their heavenly inheritance. The premature disclosing of those thoughts is supposed to cheer us and encourage us now.

( **1. Petr. 1,7** ) **We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.** It is our „justification“ in the face of God's holiness and „redeemed from the world“ through the innocent shed of blood, pure sacrificial blood (Rom. 5,1,2; 3,25 / Col. 1,19 - 20 / Eph. 1,7 / 1. Petr. 1,18-19 / 1. Joh. 1,7 / Hebr. 9,14; 10,19 – 22 ). We are clean and sanctified before God through His holy blood.

Through the blood He shed for the fallen children of man we are now revived to new life and become a part of the Father-children fellowship of God again ( Act. 20,28 / 1. Cor. 10,16 / Hebr.13,20 / Rev.12,11 ). Thereby we as His children also become kings and priests (Rev. 1,5 – 6 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,7 - 12** ) We no longer have **to prove** ourselves to get there, but we have to be purged, washed and cleansed. We also must be **tested** in our faith in Him who cannot be seen with our visible eyes. We are therewith tested in our maturity if we would be able to understand and comprehend the One whom we cannot see, but we can realize and receive the royal gift of grace. We must daily focus on taking the kingdom of God by force.

( **1.Petr. 1,8 – 12** ) **The believers have touched the invisible**. Because of the resurrection of Jesus we are closely connected to Jesus and the „other world“ of God. The heavenly hereafter with its limitless light spheres, the tabernacle and the throne of God plus endless mysteries are our true and eternal home. Thus we are influenced by this earthly world and its dark systems and have to be protected and overcome. We live in the face of this supernatural relationship. This is why true believers are not irritated by the temporary tribulations for they are only **temporary and limited in time**.

Facing eternity and heavenly conditions the time of the world does not last very long, even though it might seem otherwise. Even if the full effect of salvation is not yet visible and we can only guess about the divine wisdom and knowledge, all of that is still ensured to the believer and in the depth of His heart he rejoices over it.

Therefore: „**He loves and believes – what he has not seen**“. The natural man cannot see the divine world of the heavenly realm based on the fall. He can also not perceive the angels, their spiritual lights or the presence of God with their natural eyes. Only with the spiritual senses can a man see into the spiritual spheres which was only open to few prophets with an open (revived ) inner eye of the spirit were able to see the ancient kingdom of heaven. This “other world” which is strange to us is a totally real world of divine absolute. Peter says: “**In Him you live, in Him you believe**.” (comp.Joh. 14,6 / Luk. 16,27 – 31 ).

Belief in Jesus does not necessarily arise when we see signs and miracles because this is only a forceful exterior situation that might persuade you to believe. But only when we **see Jesus**, experience, acknowledge, understand and love Him the seed of faith starts to grow on the inside of us. The many crowds witnessed the signs and miracles that Jesus worked and they still did not believe. Because at that time there were also many magicians and witches from different nations who entertained the crowds with all kinds of things (Act.8,9-13).

It was only a small group who acknowledged the true divinity of Jesus and His miracles and faithfully held on to Him (comp. Joh. 6,67 / Mark. 15,13-14 ). **True Christians love Christ for that is what it is all about** (1. Cor. 16,22 ).

The living faith in Jesus comes by the Holy Spirit ( Joh. 6,63 ). The divine spirit of grace activates our „**perception**“ in the heart of our soul and spirit for the things of God and especially for Jesus. The central devotion to their redeemer Jesus Christ especially applies to them (Joh. 2,19 ). Who wants to see Jesus has to come out of the „**sphere of natural senses**“and believe independent of these exterior evidences (comp. Mark.16,15 – 17 ).

**If somebody testifies Jesus nowadays**, then not based on sensual perception but because of the „**revelation**“ of the Holy Spirit in His heart (comp. Eph. 1,18 / 2. Cor. 4,4 – 6 ). By faith and illumination of the Holy Spirit we see Jesus even better and clearer than the people who saw Him in His mortal body. Even the angels would like to see into this dimension ( 1. Petr. 1,12 ). Even **Angels (the ones before God, we are not referring to the fallen angels here) cannot fully understand our redemption**.

**Angels can never** understand the depth of sin we are rescued from. Therefore they can also not understand the joy and blessedness of the redeemed. Therefore they all long to see the redemption of man. Angels are not all-knowing but only ministers (1. Cor. 6,3 ).

Angels obtain no grace because they don't need it. They have a different position than we do ( Hebr. 10,17 ). Angels are sent out for ministry ( Hebr. 1,14 ), therefore they are interested in our redemption. This alone proves the great grace that God shows toward us.

**Even the prophets tried to comprehend it!** ( 1. Petr. 1,10 ). It was not possible because the **work of Christ** on Golgotha had not happened yet. Everything was sealed for them ( Jer. 30,2 ).

Also **our faith** has to prove and grow under the watchful eye of God and will be submitted to more tests and trials after that ( 1. Petr. 1,6 - 8 / Joh. 15,11 / Hebr.12,11 ). Our own pain, all of our trials and disappointments remind us of the suffering of Jesus ( Mat. 26,38 ), which is supposed to guide us to more power and joy ( Joh.1 6,21 / 1. Petr. 1,7 / Jes. 48,10 ). Compared to the length of eternal life the life on earth could even be called „short“ ( Rom. 8,18 / 1.Cor. 10,13 ). No trial lasts forever. Every test will be over, done with and through one day ( Rom. 5,3 – 4 ). God also mercifully saves us from every temptation, knowing our weaknesses ( 1. Petr. 2,9 ).

( **1. Petr. 1,9** ) We always have to keep in mind **the high goal** of our spiritual faith and fix our eyes upon it. It is about true salvation and the final redemption of our souls.

- The prophets had already declared it long ago.
- They were the sanctified vessels of God who had to announce things of importance and life to us.
- They did not prophecy out of their own thoughts, but were driven by the Holy Spirit to do so.
- The messengers received the word directly from the Holy Spirit and immediately shared it with the people.

( **1. Petr. 1,12** ) **What we experience the angels have no knowledge of /experience with.** It is so new to the angels so that they are eager to watch. Even the pure and faithful angels of God did not know those divine messengers. Concerning salvation and redemption the angels have no influence and no knowledge. Since they have not sinned of course they do not know by own experience what **sin and forgiveness** is. But still they rejoice and are cheerful when a **sinner** repents. But they do not even know the exact plan of God ( Mat. 24,36 / Mark.13,32 ). The angels know only the commands and laws of God and they work according to divine regulations and obey with gladness. But the great grace that redeems us is not according to law or regulations. Angels have no power over grace and they are also not in need of mercy. They just rejoice when a brother or a sister returns to God the Father cleansed and washed after trials and tribulations.

( **1. Petr. 1,13** ) **Consequently stay away from everything that could harm you in any way** and put your full **hope** in the saving grace of our redeeming Father Jesus. Loving faith and our God-hope are rooted in the **resurrection of Jesus** ( Eph. 3,12 / Hebr. 4,14 -1 6 / 1. Joh. 5,4 ). Without the resurrection of Jesus all spiritual efforts would be **wasted and vain** ( 1. Cor. 15,12 – 15 ).

When you have the living hope of resurrection then you make preparations with purpose. As a Christian you live in a world full of conflicts. In order to overcome those conflicts you have to be determined. Obedience of faith that brings us to the higher calling of perfection is a conscious act and a decision for God. A sanctified life requires **clear and concrete goals**. If you have made a plan than you are likely to stay away from all things that would hinder you to see it come to pass. This is how daily „**selfcontrol**“ becomes the carrier of the fruit of the spirit.

( **1. Petr. 1,1 – 13** ) Christians should be able to rejoice in every day life inspite of personal suffering and tests simply because they have received grace and were included in heavenly salvation. In verse 6 it says: „...**if necessary**...“. Sometimes hard and tough times are inevitable to strengthen us in our character and in our faith ( Rom. 5,3 - 5 / Jak. 1,2 – 4 ).

We Christians have to be purged with fire just like precious metal in order to become strong ( Vers 7 ), so that we can endure the next storm without falling back. For the children of God the many „**tribulations**“ are the most effective divine tests. **God examines us** thoroughly to find out whether our confessions of faith are only empty mouth confessions or if we are acting out of a true heart of faith (for example Job 23,10 ). God would like to be surrounded by strong, faithful and tested people full of love and compassion who are victorious overcomers.

**( Petrus 1, 13 - 25 ) A call to soberness and self-discipline.**

Peter says: "You are chosen, you are born again, you have received an eternal inheritance. You will be sustained by the power of God and your faith will be tested, and then you will rejoice with unspeakable and glorious joy so that the angel will yearn to see your salvation."

By **rebirth** we obtain **new knowledge** and also a new awareness. Our **conscience** is newly ordered and set. We do no longer have to submit to our conscience but rather our conscience now has to be submitted to our Lord, Creator and Father.

God is greater than our human **moral** ( Hebr. 10,2,22 / 1. Petr. 2,19 / Col. 2,16 / 2. Cor. 1,12 / Rom. 14,22 ). A born again also has a born again conscience and has become a new creature ( 2. Cor. 5,17 ). The new birth of the spirit are the desires, emotions, will and determination according to the eternal original that God created.

Therefore our purged thinking is supposed to newly control, biblically said **„gird“** our mind ( 1. Petr. 1,13 ). Peter applies this girding to the fickling spiritual substance of man.

Every unrest on the inside is supposed to come back together into a new, divine, pure and conscious clear mind – a sound mind (Mat. 15,19 / Rom.12,2 / Eph. 4,23 / 1. Petr. 4,1 ).

**( 1. Petr. 1,20,21 ) Jesus is the eternal lamb of God.** He was chosen long before creation and the fall of Adam to be the lamb of God. God must have planned salvation through Jesus way back in the depth of eternity ( Eph. 3,11; 1,4 / Joh. 17,24 ) and long before the actual fall of Lucifer who caused the downfall of numerous spiritual beings (humans included).

This happened a long time ago, when the material earth became a chaos in order and God started the necessary creation. Between Genesis 1:1 and Verse 2 we find more about the fall of Lucifer in a phase where the earth was still void and without life.

This Jesus was delivered unto the Jews for crucifixion according to **„the predestined counsel and knowledge of God“** ( Acts. 2,23 ). Therewith God's plan for humanity were not changed or disappointed when Adam and eve freely chose to fall into disobedience. God did not have to remake His plan. He did not have to think of a new way all of a sudden. In the contrary Adam had to fall into sin and He allowed Adam to fail when Satan came to tempt Him ( Joh. 8,44 / 1. Joh. 3,8 ). Therewith Adam was became a living soul in a mortal human body (Gen 2,7 ) and became a victim of pain and temptation. **Adam** had to sin so that Jesus Christ could be sent out as a second Adam (1. Cor. 15,45 – 49 ) and the Father could reveal His heart full of burning love for us when He gave us His only begotten Son.

Only this way God could reveal Himself to us and His love for us in order to transform us **into His image**.

**( 1.Petr. 1,22 – 23 ) When Jesus gave up His life this had consequences.** Petrus says: „You have now become set apart for God and are ready to follow His truth. And this is what you must do: **Love one another** earnestly and with a pure heart. The **„divine love“** can be known when we **„love our neighbour“** (Luk.10,29 – 37). Also the sweet **fruit of the Holy Spirit** can only grow and mature in relationship with our neighbour.

Those **holy fruits are** merciful love, patience, humility, righteousness, truth, devotion, meekness, reverence, purity, goodness, kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, gratitude and more (also Col. 3,12 – 14 ).

**In order for us to suffer for the glory of God with innocence healing is essential.**

**(1.Petr.1,14 to 3,22; key verses 2,12,19,20; 3,1,17; also 4,15 – 16 )**

1. The absolute necessity of healing for our heart and our life is the foundation of what Peter describes in this chapter. .
2. An unsanctified lifestyle exposes us to the mocking of our enemies.

**When we suffer we have fellowship with our Lord.**

**(Chapter 4; key verse 4,13 )**

1. Note: "It surprises them." ( Vers 4 ) and "Do not be surprised!" ( Vers 12 ).
2. As long as we live a holy life we have fellowship with our Lord and Father in all suffering.
3. There is **a legal covering of sin** ( Vers 8 ). This refers to **the sins of others**, and not your **own** sin.



**Who suffers must not forget the glory that will follow.**

(1.Petr. 5,1 - 4; keyverse 5,1; comp. 1,11,13; 5,10 )

1. In all suffering and trials the thought of the future is a blessed comfort. .
2. This short chapter deals with the glory that will be revealed.
3. "Stay humble" ( Vers 5 ) means to: "put on humility like the apron of a slave."

**Remember that ALL have to suffer**

(1.Petr. 5,5 - 14; key verse 5,9 )

1. It is not helpful to think that others do not suffer as bad as we do.
2. It is a fact ( Vers 9 ) that nobody is excluded from suffering.
3. "Humble yourselves" ( Vers 6 ), so that God won't have to humble you.

( **1. Petr. 1,14** ) Don't let those passions rule in your life as they did earlier when you were still in spiritual ignorance and **Pagan** desires and abominations. The converted believers have now come to the full knowledge of God.

(1. Petr. 1,20 ) Even **before the foundation of the universe**“ He was chosen. But because of you / respectively because of us He **came in the last period of time**.

**Our time period** is the last stage of a divine redemption of those who are in captivity in darkness. He appeared at the end time of salvation. The soul is submitted to a greater power. The divine **I AM**. What else could our poor soul cling to in eternity?

**To be spiritually dead is worse than to be physically dead**. The soul then has to live without body and spirit in all eternity. If the soul does not have a body it can hold on to then it would like to have a spirit to hold on to. But if the spirit is dead then what can our soul hold on to?

( **1. Petr. 1,22** ) **You have dedicated your soul to God**, that you may follow the doctrine of truth which teaches you true and earnest love of your neighbour.

**Our soul should and may be dedicated to God this day**. The dedication takes place when you hear the word of truth. It happens when you accept the truth and then live according to it (1. Petr. 1,23 ). Let your love for one another come out of the depth of your heart, pure thoughts, words and deeds. Let it be a persistent and earnest love, a permanent, merciful and compassionate love that does not cease within a moment like carnal love that changes its mind. Because God created us out of an **eternal seed of life and love**. We were created, begotten and saved by the endless and patient love of God. An eternal God of creation who creates and sustains unlike His satanic enemy. This undecipherable, merciful love of God will not let anybody get lost forever. Everything that this love of God once created in the divine source of all life.

( **1. Petr. 1,24 – 25** ) **All earthly things compared to that are vanity and temporary**, like a flower or grass. As divine counterpart stands the Godhead in His holy word. The message of salvation will never pass away. The salvation that was promised remains.

The clear order of the **»domestic code«** in Ch. 2 and 3, which exhorts Christians to good deeds within the structures of this world was already given to the author. The intensity of the letter displays the main message of Peter who wants to encourage the Christians to be obedient in the face of suffering.

( **1. Petr. 2,1 - 3** ) **The „born again“ must continue to grow**. Just like God once separated light and darkness in the process of creation (Gen. 1,4 – 5 ), there must also be a process in the born again person. So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. The born again should only desire the **„pure milk of the word“**. This refers to clear biblical proclamations / teachings and not psychological speech. Paul had to give them sth to drink because they were **„carnal and emotional minded“** ( 1. Cor. 3,1 – 3 ) and therefore were not mature enough for solid nutrition (Hebr. 5,13,14 ).

(**1. Petr. 2,1 - 10** ) **This deals with spiritual growth**.

In 1. Petr. 1 we can see rebirth, the beginning of spiritual life. In Chapter 2 we see the process of spiritual life.

**The N.T. Speaks a lot about spiritual growth of the believer.** The growth in faith is very important. Growth requires a lot of health. The biological growth is determined by nutrition, fresh air, etc. and it is the same with spiritual growth ( 1. Petr. 2,2 - 5 ).

( **1. Petr. 2,4 - 5** ) **Jesus, the living rock.** He is the rock whom the builders rejected; it is the chief corner stone. This term goes back to Is. 28,16 where it says: „**The Lord will lay a foundation in Zion**, a tested rock, a precious corner stone on solid ground. In 1. Cor. 3,11 it says that this stone is the „**foundation**“ that God laid, and is also the „**cornerstone**“ which is the chief stone that holds together the whole building (also Eph. 2,20 / Ps. 11,22,23 / Zach. 4,7 / Mat. 21,42 / Act. 4,11 ). This corner stone is also the „**final stone**“.

**That Jesus Himself is this living stone leads to three functions:**

1. He is the foundation. = The foundation of the church and the kingdom of God.
2. He is the corner stone. = The whole building of the church is carried by Him.
3. He is the final stone. = Jesus is the Lord who will return and complete the time of this earth.

Furthermore **the corner stone has the function**, to connect all the other stones of the wall with the foundation. The **corner stone Jesus** connected two different parts and made them **a unity**: the people who converted from Judaism and Paganism. For us personally we can say through Hebr. 12,2: “He is the beginner and fulfiller of our faith“. For those who reject the *suffering* of Jesus, the living rock Jesus is the „stone of offense“ or „stumbling block“ (Is .8,14 ). But whoever builds on this solid foundation will not be put to shame.

( **1. Petr. 2,4** ) „**You come to Him**...“. A true Christian is one who keeps coming to Jesus and freely chooses to be depending on Him, because he can only live through a „relationship“ with Him ( Joh. 15,1 – 17 ). A „Christian“ only has His identity when He is like Jesus and his whole being is in alignment with it.

Only this way a believer becomes a priest of God, a representative of God here on earth ( 1. Petr. 2,5 ). This way all who are born again become priests before God ( 1. Petr. 2,9 / Rev. 1,6 ) and need no mediator but Christ alone to draw close to God and serve in the temple of God, the church of the New Testament (comp. Hebr. 13,15 - 17 / Rom. 12,1 ).

The **priest** has a **three-fold mandate**:

1. He mediates between the people of God who are His children and God Himself, he is the **intercessor** of the people of God.
2. He hears the Holy voice of God and shares it with the people of God, all those who have not yet access to the hearing of the **divine** voice of the Father in their own heart ( Mal. 2 ).
3. And the priest also offers **sacrifices of praise** to God ( Hebr. 13,16 ) and proclaims the attributes and works of God, honors God and declares His righteousness.

**This is what an evangelist** does for the unbelievers of the world. The **priest** cares for the believing people of God. To share all of God's words with unbelievers would be like casting pearls before the swine. It would also be a iniquity because you would provoke the sinner against the Holy Spirit.

For this given reason they should not be counseled at first, but they have to be „**evangelised**“. They have to believe in God and His existence first, before you share with them more about the counsel of God, His will, power, etc. Only after that the Holy Spirit can start to work within them ( Hebr. 11,6 / Joh. 1,18 / Rom. 1,20 / Col. 1,15 / 1. Tim. 1,17; 6,16 ).

**Disobedience and doubt** seem to correspond to one another, because if someone really does not believe, this is a person who does not want to listen to God in the depth of his heart and therefore is stubborn and proud which is disobedience. **To be offended at the word of God and to stumble over the stones of truth is the destiny of the unbelievers.** They are not laid to offend but actually rather to stumble. If someone expresses disrespect or mocking about Jesus Christ they will have to stumble and fall until one day they come to their senses and ask for help.

( **1. Petr. 2,9 - 10** ) **But you are a chosen generation.** At first this only applied to Israel ( Ex. 19,6 ), but now this applies to all people without exception who are willing. This applies to Israel as well as all other people of the earth. Israel itself has not yet become part of the people, because God has rejected them (Deut. 28,64 ). They live in darkness and are scattered across the nations because they rejected the Saviour Jesus Christ ( Rom. 11,15 / Hos. 1,9; 2,25 ).

( **1. Petr. 2,11** ) **Abstain from the passions of the flesh**, all of the earthly passions, desires and distractions that might seem harmless at first sight but are a temptation. Our desire is one of the worst enemies of our soul and wars against it in order to bind our spirit. .

( **1. Petr. 2,11 – 3,7** ) **Live a life pleasing to God.** Peter is writing a letter to believers, who are living as strangers and sojourners under strange rulers, even as slaves, who are oppressed and abused, have to suffer injustice and have no more hope. They are still supposed to live a life pleasing to God, so that other people might be won for faith in God by their righteous and holy lifestyle.

( **1. Petr. 2,12 - 17** ) **Always keep your conduct honorable**, so that the people can see the good in you and recognize God in you and cannot say anything bad about you ( Tit. 2,7,8 ). He concludes it this way: »Respect all people, love the bretheren, fear God and honor the king« Everybody should be appreciated because we were all created in the image of God ( Gen. 1,26 ). The fellowship of the believing brothers and sisters should be in love. »Whosoever loves his brother walks in the light and ther eis no darkness in him« ( 1. Joh. 2,10 ). And they should fear God, because »the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom« ( Ps. 111,10 ).

( **1. Petr. 2,18 - 20** ) **To the slaves.** In the first ages of Christianity there was still slavery. Paul challenged the slaves to persevere. It might sound controversial to some that trials and injustice or even innocent suffering should be borne with merciful love and is even a special gift of God that will one day give us a great and eternal reward. .

( **1. Petr. 2,21 - 24** ) **Suffering is the calling of the believer.** This is what people had to go through in many cases ( Mat. 23,35 / also 1. Thess. 3,3 / 2. Tim.3,12 / Hebr. 12,3 ).

**Discipleship of Jesus** means in every aspect: to imitate the walk of Jesus here on earth in our daily life and to walk in His shoes, embody His purposes and represent Him as role models (also 1. Cor. 3,10 – 13 ). The disciples of Jesus were supposed to „act“, just like Jesus acted. Let us think like Jesus would, let us feel like He did and let us do what He would do in our situation.

( **1. Petr. 2,5** ) An **encouragement to live a life of sacrifice**. Sacrifice and ministry is a difference. A ministry does not have to be a sacrifice. In the service for God we can bring our gifts that He gave us and receive joy and pleasure in return.

**Peter mentions „spiritual sacrifices“.** Those are not **animal sacrifices**. The sacrifice of Jesus was sufficient and replaced them. Spiritual sacrifices are things that we do not like to do by nature or even cannot do, but we still do it „for Jesus“. And when we do that, God gives us the required strength and ability. Then we can even do those things easy and with pleasure. Maybe in the same manner like Abraham acted when he was supposed to sacrifice Isaac.

Furthermore „spiritual sacrifices“ could be that we give up certain habits for the sake of Jesus in order to serve Him better and more effectively. 1. Petr. 2 starts with the words : „Now put away with...“. It mentions certain sins or behaviours such as „malice“. It refers to „willfull evil-doing“, conscious dishonesty, false godliness and love or resentment, slander and defamation. This also includes criticism, because every criticism reveals a bit of pride and is often an indicator of things that we do not like in ourselves. But since we hide it in the dark and don't want to face it God shows it to us in the mirror of a neighbour's life.

**As a born again Christian** we can no longer be „two-faced“ and put up a super-nice face and then slander behind people's back. This is where spiritual sacrifices start, when you stop to envy someone who is mor successful than you, for example. There is also „religious envy“, where somebody does not rejoice over the spiritual gifts of others and is jealous. Also spiritual pride about vast bible knowledge, just like the Pharisees, must be avoided. .

**Spiritual growth takes time**, sometimes even a lot of time. Just like every fruit on a tree needs a full measure of time until it is ripe, the **fruit of the spirit** als takes time to grow slowly ( Gal. 5,22 ). It happens through the „feeding of God's word“ ( 1. Petr. 2,1 – 10 ). This can only be successful when we **put away all malice** which is the requirement to receive it (comp. Jam. 1,21 ). This is what sparks our fire for the Lord ( Ps. 37 ). As long as our thinking is filled with earthly thoughts we are not able to receive the divine and spiritual. All worldly, material, carnal or like-minded thoughts poison our heart, soul and spirit. God does only inhabit pure hearts, which means to think pure, clear and God-conscious thoughts. Our „desire“ cannot aim at many things at the same time. We have to be hungry for God and His pure word ( 1. Petr. 2,2.). The believer is supposed to read, understand and know the word of God. You can ask Jesus to read the verses with you so that through His Holy Spirit every word will be unlocked in its meaning within your heart. The word of God is God Himself, because the Word became flesh.

( **1. Petr. 2,5** ) **Priesthood in general**. In the NT all believers are called to the „**priestly office**“. The role model can be found in the Old Testament. There the priest was the mediator between the people and God. The way how they entered into that ministry is described in **Lev. 8 and Ex. 29**. Among other things they had to be healthy and spotless. They had to go through certain purification rituals and other religious rituals and had to wear special clothing, etc. Their privilege was the access to God ( Rom. 5,2 / Eph. 3,12 / Hebr. 10,19 ). They were allowed to eat of the sacrifices which means they shared the table with God. They also had no portion of Israel because God Himself was their portion.

( **1. Petr. 2,9** ) **You are a chosen generation**. Peter builds on the topic of election in 1. Petr. 1,1 and reminds us that we are a great exception surrounded by stubborn unbelievers whose destiny is destruction. He also builds on the OT, especially the prophet Isaiah (Is. 43,18 – 21 ). The title „**chosen generations**“ only applied to Israel in the beginning, but now it applies to all people who are willing to accept and follow Jesus.

On mount Sinai God told the people of Israel through Moses: „*You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ...*“ ( Ex. 19,6 ). But now in the era of grace and the church the believers are called a **royal priesthood**. He uses two different terms in this chapter. „**Holy** priesthood“ ( 1. Petr. 2,5 ) and then „**royal** priesthood“ ( 1. Petr. 2,9 / comp. Rev.1,6 ). The first is referring to **ministry of God** (to present to God spiritual sacrifices) and the second refers to the **ministry of the world** (...so that you can proclaim the mighty works of God..). The church of the elect, which are the true believers, is an unusual, **special kind of people for God**. They are God's „own“. There are similar terminologies as in the OT in the **predetermination of Israel**, but they cannot be related to one another. One is a different level of the kingdom of God and His reign. There is a lot of similarity with Israel and the priesthood and its functions. But similarity does not mean equality. This „**election happens under different conditions**. Israel became the nation of God at the Mount Sinai where they received the „**law**“, and the church of God are the people of God who came by „**grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit**“ ( 1. Petr. 1,13 ; 2,10 ).

( **1. Petr. 2,9** ) **The assignment for the royal-priestly people of God** are to proclaim the attributes and the praise of God (comp. Is. 43,21 ) and to display the praiseworthy character traits of Jesus in our own lives.

### ( **1. Petr. 2,11 - 3,22** ) **The attitude of Christians...**

- ...toward the Gentiles 2, 11 - 12
  - ...toward rulers 2, 13 - 17
  - ...toward our bosses 2, 18 - 25
  - ...toward our spouses 3, 1 - 7
  - ...toward all believers, 3, 8 - 22
- and all according to the role model of Jesus

( **1. Petr. 2,24 - 25** ) Through the rebirth the believers are now regenerated by the eternal seed of God. Therefore they are now „**eternal**“ just like the eternal word of God. We are no longer just carnal and perishable like grass. **The believer becomes born again by God**; he does not become „recreated“. God did also not create a new earth in Gen. 1,2, He only said let there be and then the earth brought forth.

Through faith in the word of God we are a **new creature** ( 2. Cor. 5,17 ). We do not receive a new physical body or a new physical heart, but we are **transformed on the inside** ( 1. Cor. 15,51 ). This spiritual transformation of our whole being (Is. 31,33 / Ez. 36,26 ) is necessary so that we do not have to continue to live without God like we used to before. We can rather lead a life in the „**heavenly realm**“ now ( Eph. 2,6 / 1.Thes. 4,15 - 17 / 2. Tim. 4,18 ).

In the **rebirth** we will receive a spiritual and „heavenly body“ ( 1. Cor. 15,44,49 ). Only in this „**changed body**“ we can understand God and His Kingdom in the origin before the fall ( Joh. 3,4 – 7 ).

( **1. Petr. 2,25** ) **You were like lost sheep**. Conversion is repentance. He said: „*You have turned away...*“. They did not only „**change their thinking**“, but also practically changed their ways / lifestyle.

In the first Epistle of Peter the explanation of the promise of salvation lacks the theological edge and the originality of the Pauline thought patterns. The only new thing is the introduction of the road to Hades and the meaningful **message of Hades** ( 1. Petr. 3,19ff. ).

**A difficult part is** 1. Petr. 3,19 / 4,6. The preaching of Jesus to the **“spirits in prison”**. It is referring to **apocryphal traditions**. The first Christians had no problems to also use the Apocrypha in their proclamations or quotes (Jude 14 - 15, or also vers 9) . The author wrote this apocryphal message of Jesus at the moment of his death. This part is one of the most important foundations for the doctrine of Jesus' descension to the uttermost parts of hell (1. Petr. 3,19) .

**Jesus disempowered hell for eternity through His sacrificial death**. He took away all the power of the enemy. God place all humanity in the material vanity in the face of death where judgment awaits us ( Hebr. 9,27 ). **The court of judgment is not yet hell**. We will all have to face the **judgement of God** in order to be delivered more and more from all material sustances. Even if we have long been redeemed by Jesus, there is still a day of judgment which is necessary according to the order of God and everybody has to go through it.

Jesus was condemned for us at the cross, **He became a curse for us** ( Gal. 3,13 ) and became sin for all men ( Mat. 1,21 / Joh. 1,29 / Rom. 3, 9- 12 / Rom. 4,5 etc. ).

**There at the cross He became our substitute**, for all humanity including all man of this life and the hereafter, everybody who ever lived, who lives right now and who will live. For all thos dark souls who lived before His crucifixion and have died He went down to the deepest parts of Hades.

He went down to redeem all of them back to Adam and Eve ( Eph. 4,8 - 19 / 1. Petr. 3,18 – 20 ). From the beginning they all had **a promis of a redeemer** ( Gen. 3,14 – 15 ).

And God did not condemn Adam and Eve after the fall of man but made them clothes to cover their nakedness ( Gen. 3,20 ). This is an **indication** that an animal, a lamb, had to give its life. And **by the submission of the woman** to the man the **„disorder of creation“** was put back in order ( Gen .3,16 ) Therefore it is remarkable that in all old religions and cultures of the world the submission of the woman is required and lived out. You may ask why this is the case. This is a secret: in this way the creation work of God is continued and life is sustained. That is why Adam called his wife Eve, **mother of all life** (Gen. 3,20) .

To all of those people Jesus went down into the **„kingdom of death“**, where all the living were taken captive. For me this means that the **„kingdom of God“** now is in the power of Jesus. Jesus died as a righteous man **for all unrighteous** ( 1 .Petr. 3,18 ). When Jesus breathed his last breath and the sun was darkened and the veil in the temple was torn, was probably the moment when also the underworld was redeemed ( Luk. 23.46 – 46 ).

Ever since Jesus can say: **„All power in heaven and on earth and under the earth were given to me“!** This also includes the underworld. This also includes all the ones who have died and live in the hereafter. The keys of **death and hell** are in His hands. So that everybod can confess: „Jesus is Lord!“ ( Phil. 2,8 – 11 ). And whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved, no matter where he is at the moment.

**When Jesus went down into Hades** he already preached to the ones who had died. It even mentions those who died before the flood. **Jesus' victory** also applied to the underworld ( 1. Cor. 15,25 ). Just like physical death that placed Adam in this world and was passed on to all people and still is. The same way the **„second Adam“** Jesus brought true and eternal life to all people (Rom. 5,12 – 20) .

Jesus Himself said that He will not judge anybody and that He did not come to condemn ( Joh. 3,17 ). He said to the sinner: “Go and sin no more!” **God wants all men to receive help and to come to the delivering knowledge of the pure truth** ( 1. Tim. 2,4 – 6 ). He gave Himself **as ransom for ALL**. The bible says that all those who belive will not be lost but have eternal life ( Joh. 3,16 ). Note the word **“ALL”**. It does not tell us in what condition they came to Jesus wether it be on the earth or under the earth or even somewhere else in different places of the cosmos. Jesus went down to „Hades“ and preached to the spirits just like He used to preach the gospel to the Jews. Before He died He told the disciples that He must go and save **„other sheep“** ( Joh. 10,16 ). Without preaching, the spiritual feed of the holy word of God, we cannot believe (Rom 10,17 ). Therefore all men must hear the gospel and have to hear the Good News of divine truth. In the Last Days, which began with the first coming of Jesus and will last till His second coming, three angels are preaching the gospel ( Rev. 14,6 – 13 ) the good news of our Father in heaven and call people to repentance. The people who are still alive will be so blinded and stubborn, that they will not be able to receive the **„message of grace and love of God“** and also are not able in the dark condition of their soul (Rev. 16,2,9,11,21) .

**God is the most righteous judge** and always gives people a „**second chance**“. Some are rescued out of fire, their works are burned down but at least their soul can still be saved ( 1. Cor. 3,11 - 15 ).

That Jesus went to hell is a fact just like the fact that He ascended to heaven. Both events must not be separated ( 1. Petr. 3,18 – 20 ). Jesus is the glorious Saviour of all humanity: people from all ages, races and cultures, sheep in all kinds of places, over and under the earth and everywhere. The punishment for the original sin of humanity was washed away at the cross by Jesus.

When in the dark underworld somebody honestly calls upon the name of the Lord He will also be saved ( Act. 3,21 ). And apparently souls are delivered from the underworld, the **sheep of a different flock** who hear the voice of Jesus and will also follow Him ( Joh. 10,16 ).

**When we die physically we do not stop existing.** We know the parable of Jesus about the poor Lazarus and the rich man. He asked Abraham to send Lazarus to his brothers so that they won't come to this place of torment. This was said before the redemption work and before Jesus went down to Hades. Neither **Abraham** nor Lazarus were able to help this man who was rich on the outside but poor on the inside. They were not able to redeem him. But Jesus is. Today, after **Golgotha** the situation is different. Jesus is alive and with Him we shall also live. To the **thief** at the cross He promises: "Even this day you will be with me in **paradise!**"

When Jesus died the kingdom of death was divided. Before that the devil and all of his demons as well as those who already died were in the same „pot“ - hell. This word as such does not exist in the original text of the bible. Actually „**hell**“**the remoteness of God** as a condition of a heart that is without God. Heaven is the presence of God. We also read in the bible that the sea gave up the dead, death gave up the dead and hell **gave up the dead** ( Rev. 20,12 - 13 ).

The demons / all fallen angels **have no physical body**: For them there is no rescue. A man can rise again because he has a body. All has to go through the fire, which means the judgment of God ( 1. Cor. 3,13 – 17 ). To whom much was given, much is required. If someone does not know much, not much will be required of him ( Luk. 12,47 – 48 ). If someone brought many people to righteousness he will shine like the stars and receive a great reward (Dan. 12,2 – 3).

**We all have to go through the judgment of God**, even when we have received Jesus as our Lord. However, we already received justification through Jesus. We do not have to fear. For us it is also about the reward we will receive for the works we did through His power.

We are already delivered from the power of spiritual death. The devil no longer has the power to hold anyone in the underworld ( Act. 3,24 ). The gates of hell cannot prevail against His church ( Math. 16,18).

In order to understand redemption and everything that happened back then we have to be aware that everything happened before the eyes of God in eternity beyond space and time. It is finished. When Jesus prayed on the cross: "Father forgive them for they know not what they do!", this forgiveness was for all men and all times. This did not only apply to those who were standing at the cross and witnessed the events of Golgotha. It was referring to all who lived, are alive and will live. Peter said the promises are for you, your children and all that the Lord will add ( Act. 3,39 ). And for us carnal men it is hard to understand.

God will call His beloved, the people, the works of His hands and His image, and He will not destroy them. With God there is no eternal condemnation. God will also not destroy the unbelievers. God overlooks the time of ignorance (Act. 17,30 ) and proclaimed to all people that they should and can repent. Jesus did that even in Hades.

That which is of God will ultimately return to God. The spirit of man originated from God, the eternal Father. Our soul was created by God. God breathed into us. He will require everything back. **He will call back all of His children** ( Ps. 90,3 ). All of them.

**When Jesus preached to the dead**, He did not do so in order to condemn them for eternity, but in order to rescue His beloved, suffering children. He went down to open the doors of the countless captives who had not yet repented.

Only this way resurrection from the dead is possible. Jesus is the „first“ of the resurrection because He took the power of death away. **His preaching** was supposed to open the doors of prison. Jesus' assignment was to proclaim liberty to the captives. Jesus became equal to us in all things, even in death ( Luk. 23,46 ). And thus God Himself went down into the terrible kingdom of death through Jesus Christ in all of His power, might, authority and strength full of merciful love, patience and sincerity (comp. Act. 2,27 ) to those who had not heard of redemption and the fulfilled work of Christ and His resurrection.

In this dark kingdom of death and painful condemnation Jesus Himself showed up ( Luk. 16,23 ) to bridge this gap and give new hope to all those who died without hope and under painful torment waited for rescue. Jesus died for all human souls without exception and became the „**light of life**“ especially for those who are stuck in terrible darkness. The **descent into hell** is the last station of Jesus humiliation and at the same time the turning point to His exaltation. **Also the descent into the underworld is a meaningful part of the redemptive work of Jesus**. Therefore we can say with Paul: „Death where is your sting, hell where is your victory!“ (1.Cor. 15,55).

The ministry of Jesus in the underworld has nothing to do with a „purgatory“ or some “cleansing fire“ that the dead had to go through to work their way out of Hades by „good works“. It also has nothing to do with intercession for the dead in order to pray them out and shorten their torment. These teachings do not correspond to the gospel. Gospel means pure grace and is a free mercy gift of grace by God.

Redemption through Jesus happens without any human works in the form of personal efforts, no matter of what nature. This incredible, unique work of redemption of Christ applies to all people who ever lived ( Joh. 3,16 ). And such who never heard of Jesus, the divine Saviour and Redeemer, of course God will give them another chance to know Him and then receive Him as a free act of will or reject Him.

Peter mentioned consciously the people who lived thousands of years ago before the flood and also had no graceful „**special revelation of God**“ like we have today.

They also had not heard of God's covenants with people, the covenant of God with **Noah, Israel, David** and then the **new covenant** through Jesus. God would not have been righteous ( Hebr. 6,10), if He would have condemned the innocent who did not know together with the devil. Therefore Jesus went down to the cruel underworld in order to take captive the prison by preaching to all the poor spirits and souls who were still existing in this darkness under the earth. A man does not necessarily have to have a body in order to sense, taste and hear (compare the parable of poor Lazarus and the rich man in Luk. 16,19 – 28 ).

The bible says that many people with eyes cannot see and their ears can't hear ( Mat .13,13 ) because satan has the power on earth to close our eyes and close our ears which are part of our inner spiritual senses ( Luk. 24,31 / Is. 29,1 – 14 ). If he has successfully closed the eyes and ears of our heart it is an easy game to further deceive the poor people and tempt them. On earth and under the earth satan does no longer have this power, Jesus now has all of the power, strength and authority ( Mat. 28,18 ).

This **message of Jesus in Hades was different than His preachings on earth**. For here Jesus was preaching as overcomer of satan and one who had fulfilled everything in power and authority: „How could they believe without a preacher!“ ( Rom. 10,14 -15 ).

**( 1. Petr. 3,1 - 7 ) The new attitude in the family**. The rebirth in the spirit creates a change within the relationship between man and woman in marriage. This also addresses the principle of submission and is referring to free submission. Peter starts his explanation with the submission of a woman toward **her** husband. A woman is expected to accept the authority of **her** husband and takes her place in family.

God gives new order to the life of humans therefore Peter starts with instructions for the **wife**. It does not say here that women have to **submit to man in general**, it rather suggests that a woman is supposed to be submitted to **her** husband. Many don't read it that way and misinterpret that scripture.

The **disorder** and all of the chaos only came into this world because Lucifer did not want to submit to God. Therefore **restoration** of all things has to start by a free submission by obedience and love.

When a man turns to God and accepts God in His life a woman won't have a hard time to submit to God. God wants that a **husband** is won to Christ by the life conduct of a woman. She is supposed to **be a helper unto faith** in order to support Him in His relationship with God. God lost man through the woman (Eve) and thus the man is supposed to be restored to God by the loving care of a humble woman ( Tit. 2,3 – 5 ). In the bible women are great „**evangelists**“.

**A woman is supposed to have the kind of faith** that would save her and her whole house (Act. 16,31 -34 ). She is like the „lamb“ in the OT that can save the family from the angel of death (Ex. 12,7 ). One lamb was enough to save a whole house from the judgment of God. The same image can be found in the example of the prostitute „Rahab“ ( Jos. 2,1 – 21; 6,22 – 25 ).

( **1. Petr. 3,3 - 6** ) **The jewelry of a woman** is not supposed to be outward but on the inside. For God the inner man is the most important thing. Nevertheless women are allowed to dress up and look nice ( 1. Tim. 2,9 – 10 ). A man sees what he can behold with his eyes, but God looks at the heart ( 1. Sam.16,7 ). The beauty of a woman is supposed to be her heart attitude.

**Sarah is mentioned as an example.** It is a difficult part. Sarah was stubborn but perhaps also reasonable when she requested Ishmael and Hagar to leave her house (Gen 21,8 – 13 ). Abraham was sad and upset. It was his son Ishmael and Sarah asked him to lay with her maid (Gen. 16,1 – 4 ).

It is obvious that he **submitted** to his wife Sarah and acted in unbelief. After Sarah's patience had run out with Hagar and her attitude and she also had her own child, she asked her husband Abraham to send them away. Abraham did everything that Sarah asked of him. On the other hand he received assurance from God that God would not reject his son **Ishmael** but that He would also bless him. This knowledge was enough for Abraham and he agreed to the will of God.

This **main thought** is the golden thread of the Epistle. If you surrender all of you to God then you can live a relaxed life and bear the contradictions, humiliations, persecutions, etc. And referring to the „**jewelry of Sarah**“: **Rebecca** inherited this jewelry. It also included a „**nose ring**“ and other precious items (Gen. 24,30 ).

( **1. Petr. 3,7** ) **In the same way men** are supposed to love their women, carry and protect, but also respect and understand them. The husbands are supposed to be able to understand the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of their women so they can take good care of them. Paul said that a man is supposed to care for his wife just like Christ cared for the church ( Eph. 5,28 – 30 ).

Every **carelessness** would distract the common prayer, faith and relationship between them and God. Before God there is **no difference** between man and woman. **Man and woman** are „one“ in Christ ( Gal. 3,28 ); "Women are co-heirs of the grace of Jesus" ( 1. Petr. 3,7 ). In 1. Cor. 12 it becomes clear that all Christians are equal members of the body of Christ ( Vers 12ff. ) and also equally receive the gifts of the spirit ( Vers 22 – 26 ). In marriage it is about true partnership and complementation. Marriage is the smallest cell of a community.

**Between man and woman there is a certain order of creation.** A man is responsible for his wife before God and should make use of his right as a first-born ( Gen. 2,4 ). „Redemption“ does not suspend the order of creation. **The snake (Satan) undermined his authority** and the principle of hierarchy by not addressing Adam, but the weaker part „Eve“. Adam was there and did not act. Adam did not hinder her. Then Eve took control and authority over Adam. The indication to this story of the OT Paul tries to show what happens when male leadership is suspended and God's purposes disappointed. In 1. Tim. 2,8 - 15 Paul discusses what happens when we disregard the principles of God.

**Women serve Jesus and His church** which is contrary to traditional Judaism: They walk with Jesus and serve Him( Mat. 27,55 / Mk. 15,41 ) also under use of their possessions ( Luk. 8,3 ). In Rom. 16,3 -12 at least 5 women are mentioned for their ministry (Phoebe, Priscilla, Mary, Persis, perhaps Junia).

- **Women pray:** ( Act. 16,13ff. ) The prayer of the women in Philippi started a church ( 1. Cor. 11,5 ).
- **Women prophecy and speak prophetically:** ( 1. Cor. 11,5 / Act. 21,9 ).
- **Women teach women and children:** In Tit. 2,3 - 5 the attitude of a woman is described as the role model and teacher of other women. It refers to the instruction of other women as wives, mothers and house keepers



Timothy was taught by his mother and grandmother in the word of God ( 2. Tim. 1,5,3,14ff. ).

**Women help to proclaim the word of God:** ( Act.18,24 – 28 ) Priscilla and her husband interpreted the word of God to Apollos together.

**Women support their husband in ministry:** The named qualifications in 1. Tim. 3,1 - 13 and Tit. 1,6 - 9 for the choice of brothers for the office of elders or deacons can partly only be fulfilled with the help of women, especially by overseeing the house and family.

Women accompany their husbands in mission journeys ( 1. Cor. 9,5 ).

**Through her life conduct a women emphasises the truth of the word of God:** ( Tit. 2,3 – 5 ) "... so that the word of God should not be mocked."

**God is a God of order,** which also applies for His church.

**God is the head of Jesus, Jesus the head of the man, the man the head of the woman** ( 1. Cor. 11,3 ). This means that every Christian, no matter if man or woman, should freely submit to love. The bible instructs us to „submit“ and not to „**superordinate**“ how some falsely assume. The **office of church leadership** is the only office that God has restricted to men. There were also no priestesses in the temple of God in the OT. Only the pagans had priestesses.

**( 1. Petr. 3,9 - 12 ) Here Peter shares some exhortations concerning the areas of Christian life:**

- brotherhood (1. Petr. 2, 17 );
- unity of hearts (Röm. 12, 9 – 13 );
- forgiving our enemies (Ma . 5,44 / 1. Thes. 5,15 / Röm. 12,14,17 – 21 );
- speaking with a sound mind (1. Petr. 3,10 / Ps. 34 );
- overcoming of unrighteousness and evil
- patience and perseverance while persecuted (Mat . 5,10 ) etc.

**( 1. Petr. 3,15,16 ) be always prepared to justify your precious faith.** The believers should know how to answer everyone who asked them (comp. Col. 4,6 ). They should be able to give information about their faith and hope and also that their expectation is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ ( 1.Petr.1,3 ).

**Not** in heated discussions or with pride, but with compassion, meekness and respect. It is necessary to have a **clear conscience** because defamations might be going round in order to discourage them. **A good attitude** sometimes opens the ear of an opponent and he will listen.

**Blameless life conduct** is the best protection against defamation and an important requirement to reach the people to tell them about our beloved God, Lord and Saviour. **If they are still being mocked** at least they know that also others hated the Lord Jesus Christ for no reason and also those who belonged to Him who are also not of this world ( Joh. 16,19,25 ). Jesus gave His promises to the faithful ( Mat. 5,11,12 ).

**( 1. Petr. 3,17- 22 ) The righteous died for the unrighteous.**

Since Jesus was righteous and innocent but still had to die all the saints following after Him should also expect that they will have to suffer if there is passion within them to really follow the good and noble things of God. Their Lord suffered for doing good as a righteous for the unrighteous, a lover for haters. **In the baptism** they identified with Jesus and agreed with Him in every way also acknowledging their rights and deeds. When they have to face suffering, beatings, humiliations, persecutions and the like because of Jesus and their faith they should not be surprised and upset but rather praise God for it, just like the apostles once did ( Act. 5,40 – 41 ).

**( 1. Petr. 3,19 ) Jesus preaches to the dead.** This is an allusion to the descent of Christ into Hades ( Mat.16,18 ), which happened between His death and His glorious resurrection (Mat.12,40 / Act. 2,24,31 / Rom. 10,7 / Eph. 4,9 / Hebr. 13,20 ).

Jesus went into Hades, the kingdom of death and brought the whole underworld under His perfect authority ( Eph.1,21 / Phil. 2,8 -10 ) and **proclaimed to them His victory**. So that every knee would bow and every tongue confess **that He is the only eternal and true Lord** (comp. Eph.1,20 – 22 ).

**( 1. Petr. 4,1 – 5, 11 ) The church of Jesus Christ.**

The author of the Epistle is all about the **suffering according to the will of God**. On our way to the kingdom of God we have to go through many minor and major tribulations before we go „home to our Lord“ (Act. 14,22 / 1. Thes. 3,3 ).

( **1. Petr. 4,1 – 6** ) **Last days**. End time is the time between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ on earth. The Christians probably all know that this world is drawing closer to its end.

The world and its material system is ready **for judgment**. It is under the rulership of Satan. To them belong all the kingdoms of this **deceptive world**. Satan fell to earth because God banned him here. He had no other place but this earth and therefore the whole eschaton focuses on this small earth, somewhere in the midst of a huge universe. **The Last Days is the time where good and evil are coming to full maturity**. This is the requirement for the beginning of „**God's dominion**“ and the „**chasing out of Satan**“ from this earth and this world and even the universe. **The day of Pentecost started the Last Days** ( Acts 2 ) and the kingdom of God in the form of the church of Jesus here on earth.

( **1. Petr. 4,7 - 11** ) **The soon return of Jesus**. The „**end of all things**“ has come and Peter says that redemption means the perfection and restoration of all things to their divine order ( Act. 3,19 – 21 ). Also on the day of Pentecost Peter taught the theology of „**times of restoration of all things**“ and refers to the start of the **messianic era** ( Jer. 16,15; 23,8 / Hos. 11,10 – 11 ), a good time where peace and happiness will reign (Is. 11,1 – 9; 65,17 - 25 / Hos. 2,20 / Mi. 5,6 – 8 ).

**The perfection will be crowned** by the return of Jesus who will finally assume His authority in all areas of life and in this manner renews the whole creation according to the prophetic promise ( Rom. 8,19 / 1. Cor. 15,24 – 25 ). With the return of Jesus and the universal renewal a time of „**refreshing**“ starts (Act. 3,29; 1,7 / Rom. 2,6 ).

**The purpose of God** is and was to restore perfect unity between people, people and God, people and the creation of God through His Son Jesus Christ.

( **1. Petr. 4,7** ) **The believers are supposed to have a sound mind**. Everything that Peter requires of his listeners he has already gone through himself. He said: Be „**sober**“ ( 1. Cor. 15,34 ). This kind of soberness goes back to the OT priesthood. The priest was not allowed to drink any **wine** in order to discern spiritual and carnal / holy spirit and natural spirit to teach the people in the way of truth (Lev. 10,9 – 11 ).

Soberness is required of Christians in general, but especially of the „**bishop**“ ( 1. Tim. 3,2 / 2. Tim. 4,5 ). Also the **wives of the deacons** are supposed to be „**sober**“ ( 1. Tim. 3,11 ) and also of the „**elder people**“ ( Tit. 2,2 ) this is required. Soberness is not limited to abstaining from alcohol and physical moderation, but the NT also refers to a sound mind, that must not be captured by anything. Peter also speaks about „**watch and pray**“ just like Jesus said to His disciples when He referred to the time until His return ( Mat. 24,42; 25,13 / Mark. 13,33,35,37 / also 1. Thes. 5,6,8 ).

The spirit of a man can be heavy **of sensual abundance** ( Luk. 21,34; 12,45 ) but also by „**worries of food**“ ( 2. Tim. 2,4 ) or exuberant „**enthusiasm**“ or „**false teachings**“ ( 1. Cor. 15,34 ). **Non-soberness** is a snare of Satan ( 2. Tim. 2,26 ).

Sometimes unbelievers think that Christians are going too far with their zeal for God and they lost their sound mind ( Mark. 3,21 / Act. 26,24,25 ). A „**sober Christian**“ keeps control over his senses and never loses it in spite of his passion and zeal ( 1. Cor. 14,32 / 2. Cor. 5,13 ). Peter knows from own personal experience how often he was not sober and therefore spoke and acted before thinking (Luk. 9,32; 22,58 / Joh. 18,10,27 ). Jesus even prayed for him that his faith would not cease ( Luk. 22,31 – 33 ) because he used to be weak-minded. Since Peter experienced the ministry of Jesus in his own life he can give counsel to others.

( **1. Petr. 4,8** ) **The love that the saints have for each other covers a multitude of sin**.

That does not mean that we should tolerate sins or not rebuke the sinner, but that we are not to talk **evil of the sinner**. We can read in Proverbs 10,12: „Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.“ David had experienced how God covers sin. „Happy is a man whose sins are covered“ (Ps. 32,1 / Rom. 4,7 ). This means that you do not talk about this and even erase it from memory ( 1. Cor. 13,7 ). Love heals and bears everything.

Peter refers to the „**original experiences**“ of the first Christians when they still used „**to share everything**“ and „**of one mind**“. Even the unbelievers realized how much they loved each other ( Joh. 13,34 – 35 ). Peter's exhortation all try to prevent that love grows cold ( Mat. 24,12 ). The apostles have a reason for talking about „**love**“ in all of their Epistles. Love is the foundation and carrier of faith ( 1. Cor. 13 / 1. Joh. 4,7 – 12 ). They only teach their scholars what Jesus taught them ( Mat. 28,20 ).

But **through „forgiveness love covers a multitude of sins.**

**Forgiveness** is another, very **important key** for the pure kingdom of God. The believers must learn how to **forgive others, themselves and even God.** To forgive means to forget. Especially sometimes when God takes us down a tough road and we do not understand Him, or sometimes when he chastises us we must also practice forgiveness and not hold any grudges ( Pro. 22,15 ).

**Love also covers a multitude of sin** when we do not get into the sinful business of other people, we should not make a drama of their sins, not tell others or judge or condemn them ( Joh. 8,7 / Mat. 18,15,21; 7,3 - 4 / Luk. 6,41,42 ). We should practice all of that with the loving and compassionate knowledge that all of us here on earth have to fight weakness and temptation.

**( 1. Petr. 4,9 - 10 ) Christians are the stewards of God's grace.** True Christians are hospitable. Hospitality is to receive a homeless and care for him (Judg. 19,20,21,23 / Job 31,32 / Gen. 18,19,2 / Luk. 7,44 ). You are hospitable to strangers when you know that you are only a pilgrim on this earth ( Eph. 2,19 / Hebr. 11,13 / Lev. 25,45 / Ex. 22,21 / Deut. 10,19 ).

Peter encourages all to be „**hospitable**“ and to utilise their gifts to share it with others.

**( 1. Petr. 4,11 ) Instructions to the „servants“.** The ministers of the word of God are instructed: „**speak the oracles of God!**“. Speak like it was God speaking through you or what He would say. It literally means to speak in the „**present tense**“ which is here and now. Speak directly, concrete and practically. Proclaim the will of God. The preaching, the testimony and everything else should be inspired by the Holy Spirit ( 1. Cor. 14,2 - 19 / Act. 11,27 - 29 / Act. 2,4 / Rom. 12,7 - 9 ). In addition all of that should be according to our calling, just like Jesus did it ( Joh. 12,50 / 2. Cor. 2,12,13,17 ).

**( 1. Petr. 4,12 - 18 ) Once again Peter speaks about suffering and tests.**

It is God who chastises us to our benefit by purging and testing us ( Pro. 17,8 / Jer. 17,10; 11,20; 12,3; 20,12 / Ps. 7,10; 11,4 / 1. Thes. 2,4 ). He allows certain **tests** and is watching how we perform. One of the most important examinations is the permanent „**self-examination**“ ( Gal. 6,4 / 2. Cor. 13,5 / 1. Cor. 11,28 ). God allows us to be tested in our faith (Is. 48,19 ).

The **tests** are part of our „perfection“, respectively our qualification and refinement. The ones who share the suffering of Christ are supposed to rejoice. **Fellowship with Christ also means fellowship with His suffering.** If He was hated by the world – without reason and guilt – and so will be the ones who belong to Him ( Joh. 15,18,19,25 ). But suffering for Christ is a **special honor**. Full of joy the apostles went to the hearing and took the punishment upon themselves because they know it was for the sake of Christ (Act. 5,41 ). As Christians we should always be prepared to suffer for Christ and no other reason ( 1. Petr. 4,15,16 ).

## **Further thoughts about the topic suffering**

**( 1. Petr. 4 ) bearing suffering.** This chapter is the **heart** of the first Epistle of Peter. It consists of instructions of the role model Jesus who bore all suffering. In order to bear suffering in silence the believers need to have the same mind, attitude, courage, steadfastness, faith and love like Jesus.

The **vulnerable flesh** principally does not want to obey God and **all carnally minded people** want to keep others from leading a spiritual life and are trying to avoid such people who do because they will feel limited in their liberty to sin. Therefore the unbelievers persecute the believers because they awaken their conscience. They feel alienated that the believers would live such a different life and are therefore different from them and do not live according to their own desires ( Gal. 5,19 - 21 ). At first they mock them and speak bad things about them, but if that does not stop the believers they will try to destroy them. One reason is that the pure and holy moral lifestyle of a believer **convicts the unbeliever of sin** and they subconsciously feel condemned. They feel forced to think about their own behaviour more critically and they do not like that at all.

**( 1. Petr. 4, 1 – 11 ) Suffering according to the will of God is „sufferin in the flesh“**

1. Petr. 4,1 is often connected with sickness. Peter, however, is NOT talking about **physical suffering** even if this is not so wrong. Because if someone is in pain, feels weak, has a handicap, etc he will have less desire for sinful pleasures and entertaining distractions (comp. 2. Cor.12,7 ).

**Suffering often creates more intense, spiritual depth of understanding.** Therefore God uses suffering as a tool in order to raise us up because otherwise we would get stuck in the snares of the devil and not move toward God on a free will level ( Hebr. 12,5 – 6 ).

**Physical weaknesses** often draw us to Jesus, prayer the useful condition of „**seeking God**“. If someone is dead-sick and knows that he might die soon will examine his life, question things and start to see things in the light of God. The affected person will consider the things of eternity more than the things of this world in the best case. The material suffering and carnal problems always stop with death and also the time of tests on earth is over then. This can also be understood spiritually and is demonstrated and experienced in baptism ( Rom. 6 ,3 – 6 ).

The mystic **Jakob Böhme** once said this: „Who does not die before he dies will perish when he dies.“ Christians are supposed to live „**as if they are already dead**“. When we become one with Jesus the believer dies to any form of sin that is rebellion against God ( Rom. 6,7 / Gal. 2,20 ).

**Jesus did not reject suffering.** He was prepared physically ( Act. 3,18 ). Jesus suffered for our sins, mistakes, weaknesses and failures. He ransomed us with His life and His suffering. He only had us on His mind when He died for us. And thus Peter emphasizes that we should also be prepared to suffer for **Jesus and His cause** whatever it may be. If someone honestly follows Jesus he will automatically have to suffer humiliation and defamation. In the world Jesus is still despised and rejected up to day. Therefore they deal the same way with His disciples. Jesus Christ said: „If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.“ The followers of Jesus share this lot. In addition Jesus is the head and we are the members of His body. Whatever the head suffers goes down to the rest of the body parts.

„**Suffering in the flesh**“ could also mean that a Christian does not insist on his own will but realizes the will of God in his life even if that means to wait patiently and endure with perseverance the things to come. You do no longer live your life based on this time but based on the things of eternity. To a Christian this applies: „Not my will be done, but God's will be done; whatever God has planned concerning my life no matter what circumstances!“

**( 1. Petr. 4,3 - 6 ) Until now you only lived after your own mind, the desires of this world, the stubbornness of an unbeliever.**

Peter said that we should put those things away. The rest of our precious time should be dedicated to God from the point of conversion. To live according to Gentile morals is a wasted life striving for the lifestyle of the mainstream. Everything that was usual or common for society used to be an ungodly lifestyle without morals, modesty and grace. It was **disrespectful** against life itself, against God, others, creation or any authority.

**( 1.Petr. 4,4 ) Christians become strangers to this world.** They chose a different way. They see and understand the things of life differently, have other priorities( 1. Petr. 4,5 ). Also Non-Christians will have to stand before the judgment seat of God, no matter if they can imagine or not. Jesus is the **judge of all people** (Rev. 6,17 ).

**( 1. Petr. 4,10 – 11 ) Use your gifts so that the grace of God will become visible.**

The short time that we still have should be used effectively. All gifts that God gave us should be considered and used wisely for ministry.

**Here are some concrete instructions:**

- Be sober and sound in your prayers! ( Mar. 5,15 / Eph. 6,18 )
- Love each other persistently!
- Cover sins with love!
- Be hospitable!
- Use your gifts to the benefit of all!
- Be a good steward, which means manager of your resources!
- By your Christian lifestyle let ONLY Jesus be glorified!

Our assignment is **not just to serve „somehow“**, no, we should use the gifts that God gave us for the benefit of all. Actually only **„Jesus in us“** should serve in us and through us.

A **„grace gift“** is **never the effort of man**. True ministry is if we do not take the **„glory for ourselves“** and seek after a reward. When we do all we do as unto the Lord and not disconnected to Him for other people. All of our ministry / service should serve one holy purpose: **„To glorify Him!“**, all other things are not that important.

**( 1. Petr. 4,12 - 19 ) The fellowship of suffering in faith.** „Christians“ are people who are tested and proved in their faith. The **„judgment“** starts with the children of God.

**„Judgment“** is referring to **„the life conduct“**. Therefore the judgment starts with the children of God. The needs, the suffering, the tension and battles automatically take us to a place where God wanted us to be. We are not supposed to be afraid of the refining fire ( 1. Petr. 4,12 ) because it is not unusual.

**The „fire“ of the bible is always equivalent with judgment.** Fire is a mighty element from the source of life and cannot be controlled or determined by us. .

**Suffering** is still a part of our life. Those tough conditions are still a consequence of the fall of man.

**Tests** are a part of Christian life. To them it has become their everyday reality and something usual ( Act. 14, 23ff. / 1. Thes. 3,3 / 2. Tim. 3,12 ). God teaches us to deal with trials of all kind and to grow. God is always with and in us, especially during the hard times.

The **tests**, the fire, the suffering and the judgment are helping us to bring forth the real person on the inside, the jewel, the truth, the pure heart we carry on the inside. The closer we get to the Last Days the more the surreal things increase, also in the midst of the church of Jesus ( Rom. 12,9 / 2. Tim.3,5 ).

**( 1. Petr. 4,13 ) We should rejoice „in our suffering“.** Not **about** our suffering but **„in our suffering“!**

How should we do that? We are **not supposed to rebel against suffering** and turn sour because of it. We should not complain, murmur and grow bitter, also not when we are home alone, but we should learn to take the pain with boldness and just say YES to it. We are supposed to rejoice in the test of our faith because it mold us and we will receive a **heavenly reward** (comp. Acts 5,41 ).

**( 1. Petr. 4,14 ) Suffering for Jesus was and is a blessing for us** (comp. Is. 61,1 ).

It proves that we chose the right path and that God is with us. My father used to say: „No thief will chase an empty bag“. We are not supposed to **suffer for evil deeds** ( 1. Petr. 4,15 ) but for the „good“, for the truth, for love and all divine virtues.

**( 1. Petr. 4,17 - 18 ) The judgment starts in the house of God**, which is the church and the believers. The **judgment of the house of God** happens for educational reasons. It is an effective **parenting judgment**.

Therefore this form of judgment in the form of many different suffering is no longer a punishment but rather a correcting tool that brings us closer to the kingdom of God.

**Before the world is judged the children of God will be judged.**

This is usual with God. God starts with us, the ones who belong to Him.

**( 1. Petr. 4,19 ) Suffering according to the will of God.** There is suffering that, consciously or subconsciously, we **are guilty of ourselves** and some that are according to the will of God (comp. Act. 14,22 / 1. Thes. 3,3 / Mark .8,34 ). If **„we are guilty“** for our suffering then we did not obey God and His inner voice in our heart. Believe it or not but Christians are predestined for suffering in this carnal world because they are **„strangers“** and sojourners, somebody who should be rejected or isolated. We are only passing through because we have identified with Jesus.

The **time of suffering** will continue until the children of God are revealed by the Father Himself. These revelations of the children of God will occur when creation is perfected. This knowledge frees us from unnecessary pressure and impatience because God reigns from eternity and the time we live in is only a very small part of it.

**( 1. Petr. 5,1 – 5 ) Divine rules for the ministry of elders.**

Peter rebukes the elders as **„co-elders“**. As long as Peter was in the church at Jerusalem he was also „only“ an **„elder“**. It was when he left Jerusalem that he was called an **„apostle“** and preacher of the gospel.

As an appointed elder of Jesus he addresses the overseers of the church with the words: „**Feed my flock!**“. In the church of Jerusalem he was considered one of the „**pillars of the church**“ ( Gal. 2,9 ).

( **1. Petr. 5,1 – 3** ) So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight,<sup>1</sup> not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;<sup>2</sup> not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

Just like the church is submitted to Christ, the women are to be submitted to their men in all things.“ The woman also has to learn to „**submit**“ because the fall of man had something to do with rebellion and to disregard or overlook the man.

( **Ephesians 5,21** ) „Submit to one another for the fear of Christ,  
( Ephesians 5,22 ) the women unto their own husband as unto the Lord!“  
( Ephesians 5,23 ) „For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body!“

Peter also encourages that and challenges the elder. He appoints men for the office of church leadership.

#### **God has an order for the salvation and the house of His chosen people:**

- ( Col. 3,18 ) : „You **wives** submit to your husbands as unto the Lord!“
- ( Col. 3,19 ) : „**Husbands** love your wife and be not bitter against them!“
- ( Col. 3,20 ) : „**Children**, obey your parents in all things for this pleases the Lord.“
- ( Col. 3,21 ) : “ **Fathers**, provoke not your children to anger so that they won't lose courage!“
- ( Col. 3,22 ) : „**Servants**, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.“
- ( Col. 3,23 ) : „ Whatever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord and not as unto men,
- ( Col. 3,24 ) „Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.“
- ( Col. 3,25 ) „But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. “

The „**church leadership**“ is a priestly office. In the OT it was exclusively reserved for the tribe of **Levi** and in the NT it was restricted to the elders and apostles. This was the purpose of God. God Himself had appointed apostles over the church ( Eph. 2,20 ). In His revelation He sticks to this rule ( Eph. 3,5 ). The NT did not chose the radical way of Judaism where women were not even allowed to learn the Thora, nor the way of Paganism where women were priestesses. In the **spirit of the gospel** there is a new freedom for the woman, the happy medium. She is included in salvation of God, she can partake in the fullness of ministries within the church while not having to carry the burden of highest authority.

This is restricted to the spiritual men. The church is a project, a work of God. We cannot compare it to any system in the world. The church is something uncomparable: a mystery of God ( Rom. 16,25 – 26 ). It is different from any other institution or organization of this world.

The order of this world does not apply here, the order of God must be adhered: His will and His word. The assignments for men and women in the bible are a test of God. **It is a question of life and a question of faith**. According to biblical order the wife is supposed to help her husband become a real man, and a man is supposed to help a woman to become a real woman. The bible teaches us a new „**manhood**“ and a new „**womanhood**“, totally different from the concept of Judaism or Paganism. The divine order is restored.

**The office of an „elder“ is one of the most important offices in the church!** It has Jewish origin, resp. Originated from Jethro, a Midian priest, during the wandering in the wilderness. It is old-testamental (Numb. 11,16 – 30 ). It is a human concept for the facilitating of ministry. In Judaism those duties developed into a special status (comp. 2. Kin. 6,32 ). They were the counselors of kings ( 1. Kin. 20,8; 21,11, Ezra 10,8 ). Later every village and town had „elders“ who judged and helped solve discussions and arguments (comp. Deut. 25,7 ).

**The „elders“ were also the leaders of the synagogue.** The did not necessarily preach and their dutie was to oversee the fluent process of the service, etc. The **hich council**, the highest Jewish court, consisted partly of elders who were named among the high priests, rulers, scribes and Pharisees ( Mat. 16, 21; 21, 23; 26, 3, 57; 27, 1, 3 / Luk. 7, 3 / Act. 4, 5 ; 24,1 ).

In the **visions of the revelation of John** it speaks about 24 elders around the throne of God. The elders are an image that cannot be thought away from the religious or public life of the Jews. The democracy is a humanistic concept. The bible only knows **theocracy** (God's reign). The leaders of the people are depending on God.

But not only the Jews had **elders**, they also existed in the Greek world. Also in the Egyptian churches the elders were appointed to carry responsibility for the administration and organising of public affairs. Even in Pagan religious communities it speaks of elder priests. They are referring to the priests. They were responsible for discipline during the meetings. Therefore we see that the title „elders“ was a title of honor in the Jewish as well as the Greek-Roman world and that even before Christianity took it on.

**In the first church the office of an elder was of great importance.** Paul used to appoint elders in every community where he preached and also in all churches that he established (comp. Act 14,23 ). **Titus** is left in Crete by Paul to appoint elders in all the cities ( Tit. 1, 5 ). The elders were also responsible for the regulation of financial issues in the church.

**Some of the elders** served in the word ( 1. Tim. 5,17 „... those of the elders who ministered the word“). The elders were the counselors, leaders and stewards of the church. They also played an important role in the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem ( Act. 15 ). They advise concerning the decision of accepting a Gentile as a member of the Christian church, for example.

In Act. 15, 2; 16, 4 **the elders and the apostles** are referred to as the carriers of the main responsibility. During his last visit at Jerusalem Paul reported to the elders and they determined what should happen in relation to his visit ( Act. 21, 18 – 25 ).

One of the most moving parts of the NT is surely the farewell of the apostle Paul at Ephesus. Paul there calls the **elders, bishops and overseers** which shepherd the flock of God as advocates of the faith (Act. 20, 28 – 29 ).

In **The Epistle of James** we also find out that the elders were supposed to minister to the sick through prayer and anointing with oil ( Jam 5, 14 ).

In the **pastoral letters** it says the elders were **the preachers and teachers** of the church and that they were unpaid high officials ( 1. Tim. 5,17 ). The term **“double honor”** could also mean worth double wages. If someone is appointed an elder this is a great honor for he obtains one of the oldest offices of all times. The office of the elder can be traced back four milleniums if we also look back to Judaism.

**If someone becomes an elder** this is not a small **responsibility** he has to carry because it turns him into a co-shepherd of the church of Jesus and advocate of the faith. Therefore Peter mentions a lot of dangers and privileges that the office of an elder brings along. All that Peter is saying is not only referring to the office of an elder but can also be applied to any other Christian ministry within and without the church of Jesus Christ. Peter explains that the elders should not **be forced to perform the office** but should accept this calling freely. Nobody should be forced and no one should try to take it by force ( 1. Cor. 9,16 ). But if you take on an office or an assignment you should not do it against your will or think of it as a burden.

In addition the office is not supposed to be exploited economically or financially by trying to get an advantage for yourself. This would be despicable. Paul emphasises many times he never desired gold, silver or fancy clothes but earned his living by the work of his hands and was not a burden to anyone (Act. 20, 33 / 1. Thess. 2, 9 / 1. Cor. 9, 12 / 2. Cor. 12,14 ).

The **repeated exhortations** that the high officials should not seek „**vain gain**“ shows that many had wrong motives ( 1. Tim. 3,3 and 8 / Titus 1, 7- 11 ).

Peter is aiming at one certain thing – and this applies eternally – that nobody should work as a minister **because he is seeking material profit**. He should only be concerned what he can give. It is not at all about what he himself could win, acquire or gain.

Also nobody should strive for the office of an elder **to rule over the church and control it**. They should be shepherds and role models for the flock. It is in the nature of man that often power and fame are more important to them than money, even if their area of authority is very narrow. Even the devil **preferred** to rule in the small, limited hell and it seemed more desirable to him to rule over the small earth instead of serving God in the infinite realms of heaven.

If someone strives for a spiritual office because he wants to matter or get the attention or have some power, this twists the purpose of the office and has nothing to do with the original assignment of the office ( comp. Mark. 10,42 – 44 ).

The **characteristic of a good shepherd** is his care and sacrificial love for his flock. It is the will of God that the strong should serve the weaker and help them, not the other way around ( Mat. 20,25 / Mark.10,42 ).

The prophet Ezekiel blamed the **false shepherds**: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." ( Ez. 34,4 ). On the other hand the apostle Peter encourages the elders to be role models for the flock and to lead the church by example.

They are not supposed to press the people ahead but rather walk before them by example in Christian maturity. **Neither the office of an elder nor another ministry** that is offered to us represents some kind of human effort but will always bring glory to God. We do not deserve this office and owe it to the grace and will of God alone.

Peter exhorts the elders: "**Shepherd the church like God would!**"; or rephrased: „Do it like God!“, which means according to the holy and righteous will of God. Serve the church without ceasing just like God would and just like Jesus did. The elders are supposed to „**shepherd**“ the believers of the church, which mean to lead them with patience, compassion, forgiveness and generous love. Peter surely had his own experiences with Jesus in mind at the time when he denied Him ( Mat. 26,56 / Luk. 22,61 - 62 / Joh. 21,15 – 17 ).

### **( 1. Petr. 5,5 - 11 ) Exhortation to the younger and all church members.**

They were supposed to submit to the elders. All should hold fast to wholesome humility because God resists the proud and hypocritical. Humility is the only righteous balance to compensate our imperfections according to the flesh. Only considering our human nature tells us that we do not like the taste of submission. In our body there are substances of sin that have to be controlled by humility and overcoming. Therefore Peter also mentions the important topic of "**self-denial**" which is an essential characteristic of a true Christian (comp. Pro. 3,34 ). In the feet washing Jesus gave a simple and powerful example of humility and servanthood ( Joh.13 ).

In this last chapter of his letter Peter addresses the new responsibility in the church that has to face tough times. He exhorts them to humble submission because he knows how important **the unity among the believers will be in the Last Days**. He describes that the church is supposed to stick together to stand firm against the devil and the Anti-Christ.

The devil is the negative „confuser“, he wants to destroy everything and will try anything ( 1. Petr. 5,8 – 14 ). Pride and a haughty spirit are usually the reason for tension and division in the church (also Phil. 2, 2 – 4 ) This leads to the challenge: „**Be of one mind!**“

More scriptures concerning the topic „**haughtiness**“ and „**pride**“ can be found under Rom. 12,3 / Pro.1 6,5 / Obadja 3 and 4 / 1. Joh. 1,8,9. Haughtiness makes us insensitive toward the divine work of the holy spirit of grace and on the other hand blunt for compassion as a basis for a loving ministry for our brethren ( 1. Cor. 12,21 ). **Haughtiness** asks coldly: "I shouldn't have to do that?" **Humility** asks with care: „What can I do for my neighbour?“

**Haughtiness can plant its seeds in us** when we are more concerned about people's opinions **while we minister** and not if our effort truly glorifies God **and is helpful** for others. When the craving **for attention** becomes the motor and motivation of our action then some ministries are really not ministry but an expression of egoism. Because even our ministry for God can become our idol. Then a song that is supposed to describe the greatness of God becomes a tool to draw the attention to oneself and a sermon that should build and encourage others become a performance.

**Haughtiness** finds more good soil **when criticism becomes a question of honor**. When our soul is hurt this keeps us from testing if something that was said, however expressed, might hold some truth and if we could learn from it and should adjust our attitude.

As soon as the spirit of God controls us we are also **able to be humble** ( Ez. 36,26,27 / Jer. 31,33 ). Peter as one of the elders does exalt himself above the other church members but fellowshiped with them even though he might have had the right to do otherwise. The spirit of God had changed him. His letter is a „**pastoral letter**“ and he shows how „shepherding“ should look like practically. A true „ministry of a shepherd“ is full effort of self-devotion. Jesus is the role model: He gave His life for the church. „**Shepherding**“ means: protect, care, sustain, soothe, provide, guide, nourish, etc. **Humility** in the Greek was a typical „**characteristic of a slave**“, for a Christian it is the highest sign of honor.



**( 1. Petr. 5,7 ) Cast all your burdens on Him for He cares for you.** Worries are our constant guests and companions. They want to take our view of God or at least dim it but we should set our focus on our great helper and provider. We constantly have to send those thoughts away. And if they don't go we have to cast them unto God. Therefore totally devote yourself to God in a total act of devotion in prayer, a total trusting the Father God that says: „Jesus please provide!“

**There are different kinds of casting /throwing.** Because you also have to hit it. If the worries return right after the first try it was a bad throw and we did not throw it to God. It won't help and we have to cast them unto God again until they remain there and our heart is delivered of the burden so we can really give ourselves to Him.

Peter really wants to encourage the believers not to give up or grow desparate whatever may happen because God still reigns and has the last word. The worries, sorrows and suffering of our life can only be carried EITHER by us or by God.

To cast unto God means to become „one“ with God and to give everything to Him and rest with Him, just like a child in the arms of its mother. The bible is full of reports how God provided for His children (Ex 16,4 / 1. Cor. 10,4 / Deut 29,5 ). And Jesus also promises to care for us (Luk. 12,6 / Mat. 6,26,30; 10,29 / 1. Cor. 9,9 / Is. 43,2 ). The good shepherd who gave His life for us will not withhold anything from us ( Joh. 10,11 / Ps. 84,11 / Rom. 8,32 ). He cares for us from the beginning of the year till the end (Deut. 11,12 ). He carries us until the las day ( Is. 46,4 ). **God really cares for us!**

**( 1. Petr. 5,12 – 14 )** Closing: **Greeting and blessing.**

The first Epistle of the apostle Peter is a letter of **encouragement and exhortation** for all who live in a hostile environment and believe in Jesus Christ. May their living expectation strengthen them in their times of distress. But they should also align their life conduct with that of the Lord, by being prepared to suffer injustice just like Jesus also suffered being innocent.

The author illuminates **that Jesus was without guilt and still had to suffer**, so that He would be able to identify with those who suffer innocent nowadays. Throughtout humanity billions of souls are under the dominion of satan and his evil plots. Those weak carnal men are **suffering innocently**. It is not their fault. As a matter of fact most people suffer and die even though they are innocent.

It is not their fault that they have to go to war with other thousands even though it was only plotted by some few. They die by bombs or fire arms. Most of the people have not done anything to deserve losing their jobs. Unemployment is a social problem that was created by human cruelty and disgraceful people with cold hearts. **Most of the crimes such as** slavery, oppression, extortion, etc. were started by a handful of ruthless people who were so successful with it that they could have fed the whole world if they wanted to. On one hand the prices for food are bing pushed up where others throw away thousands of tons of nutritions and a single person will not be able to effect a change. They suffer from the present unrighteousness, orchestrated oppression and lack of love of God and among the people. The suffering of Jesus was a successful suffering and that is what leads us to God ( Joh. 12,32 ).

**( 1. Petr. 5,1 – 3 ) Exhortation to the elders.** Peter exhorts the „presbytes“ and the elders ( auch Tit. 1,5 – 9 ). Those who have been walking longer with Jesus should help the younger, especially the newly baptised, encourage them, give them positive counsel. They should be unto them a role model as fathers and mothers in Christ.

**The 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter is a personal legacy** of the apostle. Peter just shares his divine calling to which Jesus called him: **“Shepherd my flock!”** The readers of the letter should do likewise ( Joh. 21,15 – 17 ) until the great and only true shepherd Jesus becomes revealed.

**( 1. Petr. 5,5 – 11 ) Concrete exhortation to the believers.** The **younger** should also care for the born-again. Together they should submit to the older ones. It is a matter of fact that we humans work by submission (Jam. 4,7 / 1. Petr. 2,13 / Rom. 13,1,5 / Tit. 3,1 / 1. Cor. 14,34 / Eph. 5,22 / Col. 3,18 / 1. Petr. 3,1. / Tit. 2,5,9 / 1.Tim. 6,1 / Eph.5,24 ). God blesses the „**humble**“ (also Joh.13,14,15 / Mat. 23,12 /Is. 57,15 /Jam.4,10 ).

**( 1. Petr. 5,7 ) Christians give their worries to Jesus.**

To worry is a „dead“ work (Hebr. 9,14 ). It is in vain. To worry makes people the prisoners of the past (Corrie ten Boom), victims of the present and slaves of the future (also Pr. 12,25 / Mat .6,31 - 3 4 ).

**God wants to be our provider.**

( **1. Petr. 5,8** ) **The devil is like a roaring lion.** It is only the male lion that roars but he is not hunting. His roaring would frighten the deer, but the female lion which is waiting on the other side opposite of the noise is waiting to hunt the deer that runs away from the roaring lion.

Therefore Peter says, **be sober**, do not run to the wrong direction right into the trap of the enemy. Do not get confused. The devil is the confuser. He will intimidate and frighten people. Here Peter tries to strengthen and encourage his brethren ( Luk. 22,31,32 ). And God is the one who will give us strength. All of that is a part of the preparation for our great **royal – priestly calling**.

#### ( **1. Petr. 5.12 – 14** ) **Final message and greetings**

**Silvanus**, also called Silas, wrote this letter for Peter who obviously trusted Silas ( Act. 15,22,32,40; 16,19,25; 17,4,10,14; 18,5 / 1. Thes. 1,1 / 2. Thes. 1,1 ). He once was a companion of Paul. He was a Hellenist (Greek) and also a Roman citizen ( Act.16,37 ). Silvanus, the assistant of Peter who dictated the letter, was probably the same brother who used to be a co-worker of the apostle Paul and accompanied him during his second mission journey. The letter reads as if Peter presumes that the recipients in the churches of Asia Minor would **know Silvanus**.

( **1. Petr. 5,13 - 14** ) **The letter closes with greetings and a final blessing:** Peter greeted the churches from Babylon where he was an exile in captivity . He knew that the kingdom of Israel would not be restored in this time ( Act.1,6 ). „Babylon“ is the epitome of a God-hostile capital and also the code name for Rome.

**Marcus** who is mentioned should be the cousin of Barnabas and surely the author of the Gospel of Mark. He left Paul during the first mission journey which is why Paul would not let him journey with him again ( Act.13,13; 15,38 ). But later Mark became a useful minister for Paul again ( 2. Tim. 4,11 ). With the **kiss** of love the recipients were supposed to greet each other. This »**holy kiss**« ( Rom. 16,16 ) was an expression of brotherly friendship.

#### **Test Questions:**

1. What was the reason for Peter's writing of the 1<sup>st</sup> epistle?
2. Why did Peter write to the churches where Paul ministered before?
3. What does this letter encourage the believers to do?
4. What is the description of Jesus in this letter?
5. What is the church called which is described in this epistle?
6. What is baptism?
7. When can you baptise a person?
8. What happens in the rebirth?
9. What did Jesus do in the underworld?
10. What is the „church leadership“ and who is allowed to lead the church?
11. Why was the submission of the woman so important to the authors of the New Testament?
12. How should men behave toward the women?
13. Why is the topic of suffering so important to the author of this epistle?
14. Why are the recipients of the letter called „strangers“?
15. What is the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of Peter in actuality? Why does Peter address certain issues?

**Please send the answers** to [pastor@matutis.de](mailto:pastor@matutis.de)

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#### **Nest lesson – 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter**

And now may the Lord bless you richly with your bible studies.

May prayers are with you.

**Pastor Joh.W.Matutis**