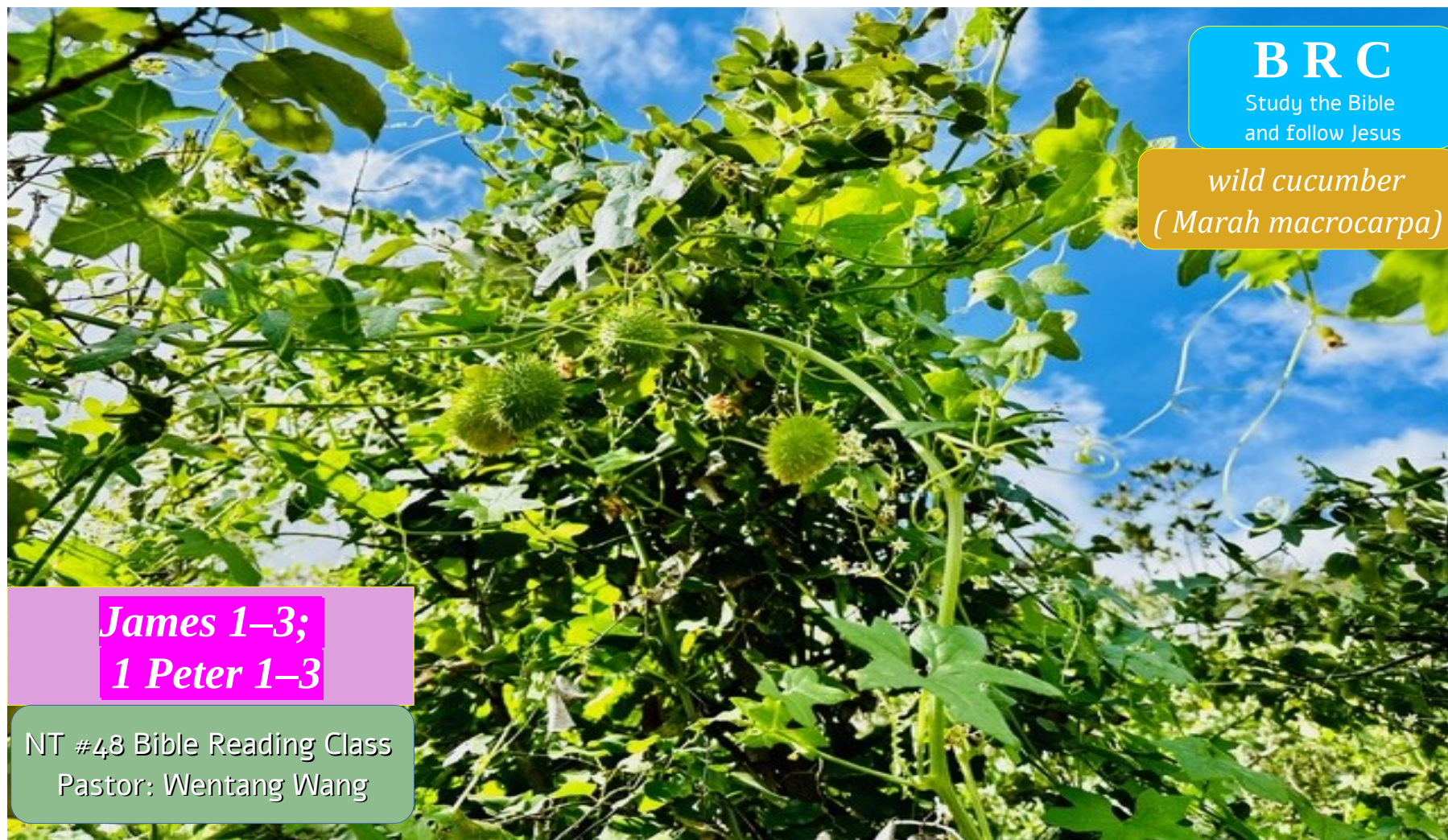




B R C

Study the Bible
and follow Jesus

wild cucumber
(*Marah macrocarpa*)

***James 1–3;
1 Peter 1–3***

NT #48 Bible Reading Class
Pastor: Wentang Wang

W.Wang

A Bible Reader's Conviction

- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV)*

A Blessed Journey

1. *May you study God's Word with a reverent heart and walk in His will.*
2. *May the Lord's Word flourish, and may He add to the church those who are being saved.*
3. *May the Lord bless your days of reading the Scriptures.*

Study the Bible, follow Jesus



The Guiding Principles of BRC



- Christ-Centered
- Bible-Based
- Mission-Minded

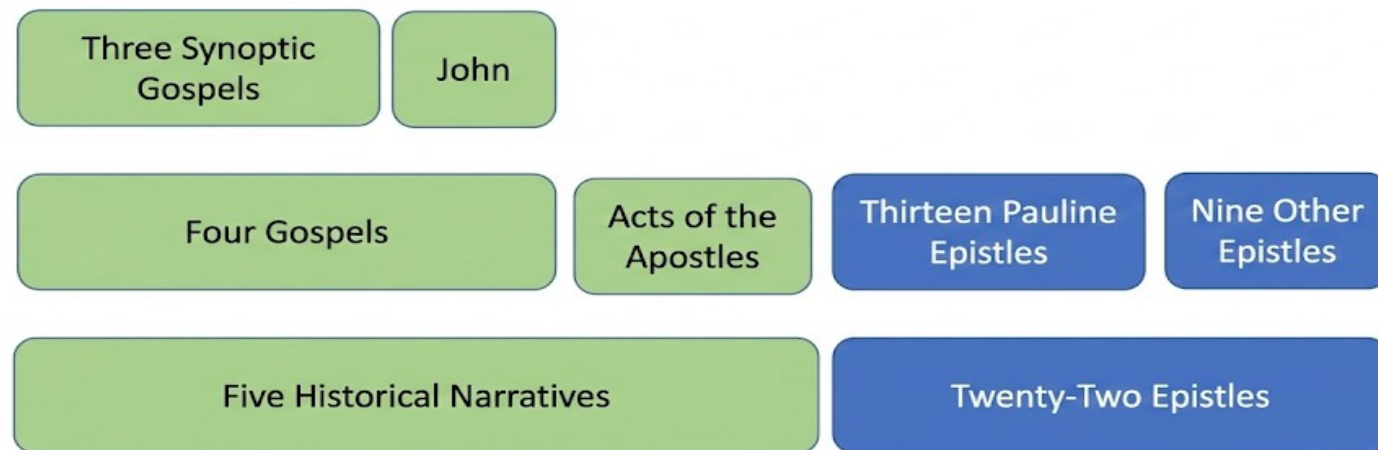
BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



- *I'll complete weekly reading assignment*
- *I'll watch weekly teaching video in its entirety*
- *I'll complete weekly quiz (closed book)*

The Structure of the 27 Books of the New Testament

- *The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) John*
- *The Fourfold Gospel, Acts, The Thirteen Pauline Epistles, The Other Nine Epistles (General Epistles and Others)*
- *Five Books of Historical Narrative, Twenty-Two Books of Doctrinal Teaching*



James

HEARING
THE WORD
AND
DOING IT

雅各書



W.Wang

Desires That Battle Within You

- *“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from **your desires** that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on **your pleasures**.” (James 4:1–3, NIV)*
- *The word “**desires**” and the word “**pleasures**” in verse 3 come from the same Greek word **hēdonē**, referring to worldly cravings—pursuits of wealth, power, sexual indulgence, food, entertainment, and pleasure. Its defining characteristic is **greed**—a hunger that is never satisfied.*
- *Because of these never-ending desires within the members of your body, you fight and quarrel. “Fights” refers to physical conflict—between individuals it means brawling, between nations it means war. “Quarrels” refers to hostility—treating others as enemies, accusing, attacking, and opposing one another. Living in the 21st century, do these words—fighting and quarreling—sound familiar?*

Desires That Battle Within You

- *Desire produces covetousness—seeing something good that belongs to someone else and wanting to take it (forbidden in the Tenth Commandment). When coveting fails, people resort to killing. Seeing another person’s treasure, they murder to steal. Seeing another man’s beautiful wife, they kill to take her (the very danger Abraham feared). Seeing another nation’s abundant resources, they destroy the nation, seize its wealth, and enslave its people.*

*Countless human tragedies, many wars in history, and much injustice in modern society all trace back to one root: **the never-satisfied desires of the human heart**. Those who lack want to have; those who already have want more—and want to prevent others from having the same. And so peace disappears from the world.*

- *James 3 ends with **peace**, but James 4 begins with **war**. Heavenly wisdom produces peace; earthly “wisdom” produces conflict. Scheming, manipulating, and stirring up disputes may look clever, but they violate God’s principles. Anything that violates God’s principles is not wisdom—even if it brings short-term gain, it will ultimately bring bitter consequences.*

Desires That Battle Within You

- *Do Christians have desires? Do Christians covet? Do Christians fight and quarrel? The Letter of James is written **to believers**—so what do you think?*

*Many church conflicts are rooted in **desire**. Paul repeatedly warns against “factions” or “**selfish ambition**” (NIV), which literally means striving to be first—something Jesus repeatedly told His disciples **not** to do, yet it is extremely common in churches.*

- *And let us not forget the scandals we have become numb to. The Catholic Church’s child abuse crisis involved thousands of clergy across Europe, America, and Asia. In Protestant churches, sexual sins include adultery, child abuse, harassment of women, and homosexual misconduct—committed by pastors and leaders. Add to this the greed, fraud, and financial exploitation done “in God’s name”—cases too numerous to count.*

And these are only the cases that made the news and involved church leaders—just the tip of the iceberg. What about those that never became public? Do Christians have desires of the flesh? What do you think?

Cutting Into One's Own People

- *In order to cover up their own sins and divert society's attention, some Christians begin loudly condemning others. They attack abortion, they attack homosexuality—with great volume—yet their voices against greed and adultery are faint. Why?*

Because many Christians are greedy, and many are unfaithful to their spouses. So they hide their own sins by accusing others, all the while imagining themselves to be morally superior.

*But the Letter of James shows no leniency. It exposes the sins found among Christians: **“You adulterous people! Don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God?”***

If you don't even understand this, and you spend your days fighting and quarreling, how do you still have the nerve to judge others?

- *Among all the New Testament letters, James is the one that “cuts into its own people” with the greatest seriousness—carrying the tone of a prophet. You know how prophets rebuked God's people—they held nothing back. James exposes the hypocrisy of Christians with the same intensity. Is this good? This is Scripture—God's word. What do you think?*

Cutting Into One's Own People

- In this passage about desires, James highlights one particular issue: **prayer**. Christians, you do not have because you do not ask. And when you do ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives—so that you may spend what you get on your **pleasures** (*hēdonē*, the same word as “desires”).
- In chapter 1, James warns believers not to be deceived into thinking that good things come from this glittering world: **“Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.” (1:16–17, NIV)**

Since good gifts come from God, then simply ask God! Yet many Christians would rather scheme within the world, using worldly methods to satisfy themselves, instead of asking God. And when they do ask, their motives are often corrupt—because they want to “spend it on their pleasures.”

We already know that “pleasures” and “desires” come from the same Greek word. You may say, “I’m not seeking pleasure—I want reputation and status.” Don’t forget—**that too is satisfying your desires.**

Grace to the Humble

- Many people say that the Letter of James is the most practical epistle in the New Testament. I fully agree—but I would add one more sentence: **James is also the epistle that “cuts into its own people” with the least mercy.**

Christians who have been pampered by the prosperity gospel may say, “Shouldn’t we always speak encouraging and comforting words? Shouldn’t we always claim God’s promises by faith? Should we really pay attention to such confrontational passages?”

They may have forgotten—or perhaps never read—that one-third of the Old Testament consists of prophetic books, and besides God’s promises and words of comfort, **far more** of their content is rebuke directed at God’s own people.

- Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot pick and choose God’s word according to our personal taste. We can only humbly say, **“Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” (1 Samuel 3:9)** Behind rebuke is the Father’s love; the purpose of cutting is the healing of the patient. James says, **“God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” (James 4:6, NIV)** May you receive God’s word with a humble and teachable heart—**you will be blessed.**

Loving God and Loving the World (James 4:1–10)

- **Friendship with the world is enmity with God**
 - *“Don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4, NIV)*
- **What is “the world”?**
 - The word “world” (kosmos) refers to ***the operating principles and values of the world***, characterized by:
 1. **Prioritizing this present life** — valuing earthly life above eternal life.
 2. **Prioritizing material things** — measuring a person’s worth by wealth and possessions.
 3. **Despising spiritual things** — disbelieving or belittling spiritual realities.

Loving God and Loving the World (James 4:1–10)

- **You Can Choose Only One**

- *If you love God, you cannot love the world.*
- *If you serve God, you cannot serve Mammon.*
- *If you befriend the world, you become an enemy of God.*

- **Why You Do Not Receive**

1. **Because you do not pray**— “You do not have because you do not ask.”
 2. **Because your motives are wrong**— “When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”
-

Self-Rule vs. God's Rule (James 4:11–17)

- **Two Examples of People Making Themselves Their Own Master**

1. **Judging Others** : *Judgment belongs to God, not to humans. God's judgment is righteous; human judgment is biased.*

- *“There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?” (James 4:12, NIV)*

2. **Thinking You Can Control Tomorrow** : *We must face tomorrow with humility, because tomorrow is full of variables we cannot predict or control. To think we can master tomorrow is to make ourselves God—and to invite destruction.*

- *“Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow... Instead, you ought to say, ‘If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.’” (James 4:14–15, NIV)*

The Two “Alas!” Cries in James

- *“Alas! You who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.’ Yet you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” (James 4:13–14)*
- *“Alas! Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming on you.” (James 5:1)*
- *In the Letter of James, two cries of “Alas!” echo forth—lamenting the ignorance of humanity. The first “Alas” mourns humanity’s ignorance about this present life. The second “Alas” mourns humanity’s ignorance about the coming judgment. In daily life, people are busy planning, busy making money, unaware that they are merely a mist that appears briefly and then disappears. Some truly do become wealthy and live in abundance, but then they busy themselves with hoarding, exploiting, and oppressing the poor—unaware that the day of slaughter is near, and God’s severe judgment is approaching. Yet alas is alas, and lament is lament. The ignorant remain unchanged—day after day striving anxiously, busy making money, busy planning, busy indulging themselves, never considering that their end is near, never realizing that great disaster is approaching.*

Other Teachings 5:1–20

1. A Warning to the Rich (James 5:1–6). *Wealth is God’s blessing—you may enjoy it, but you must also share it and use it to honor God. Common mistakes include:*

A. Hoarding wealth (refusing to let God’s blessing flow) : “Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. Your gold and silver are corroded... You have hoarded wealth in the last days.”

B. Withholding wages (ignoring God’s children): “The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you.”

C. Living in luxury and self-indulgence (ignoring God’s judgment): “You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.”

D. Condemning the innocent (disregarding God’s justice and human life): “You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who was not opposing you.”

Other Teachings 5:1–20

2. Be Patient (Hold Fast in Faith) — James 5:7–11

A. **Be patient like a farmer:** *With steadfastness, he waits for the harvest of the earth.*

B. **Be patient like the prophets:** *Though persecuted and seeing no visible results, they remained faithful to God's calling and completed their mission with endurance.*

C. **Be patient like Job:** *He endured great suffering, wrestled with deep frustration, yet held on until God appeared—and received a good outcome.*

3. Do Not Swear Oaths (Let Your Words Be True) — James 5:12

- Let your “Yes” be yes and your “No” be no.
- The kind of oath condemned here is a form of **cover-up**—using “the name of the God of truth” to *hide one's own dishonesty.*

A World Dominated by the Powerful Rich

- *“You have hoarded wealth in the last days. The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.” (James 5:3–6)*

- Scripture says **greed is idolatry** (Colossians 3:5) and **the root of all kinds of evil** (1 Timothy 6:10)—a severe verdict. Idolatry is sin against God—the greatest sin of Israel throughout history. The “root of all evil” is sin against humanity—the source of human suffering and injustice.

The rich have money, and money gives power. With power, they underpay workers, delay wages, or refuse to pay at all (slavery). With power, they declare the innocent guilty and themselves innocent.

*In a sense, human history is the history of the powerful rich, while the poor are sheep ready for slaughter. But James reminds us: **above all this stands God**. God hears the cries of the workers and will bring justice. The oppressive rich will face God’s severe judgment and pay for their greed.*

Other Teachings 5:1–20

4. The Power of Prayer (James 5:13–18)

A. Anyone suffering — should pray.

B. Anyone cheerful — should sing praises.

C. Anyone sick — should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

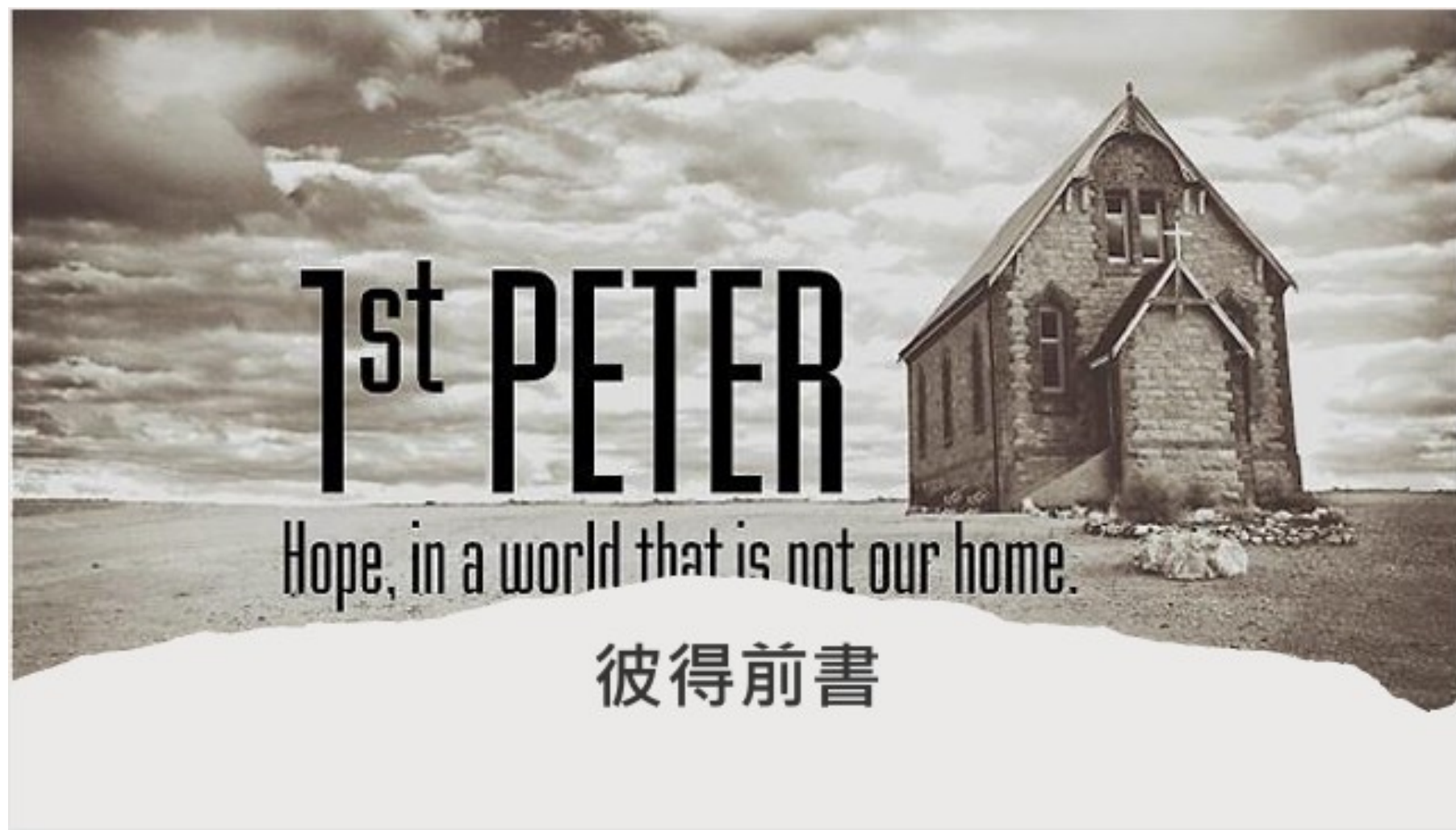
1) Anointing with oil — the physical aspect; in ancient times oil was commonly used for healing.

2) Prayer — the spiritual aspect; asking God to heal.

5. Turning a Sinner Back (James 5:19–20)

A. One who wanders from the truth — a person who has lost the way.

B. Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way — leads him to repentance and faith in the Lord.



Introduction to *I & II Peter*

1. Author: Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ

- The authors of both *I Peter* (1:1) and *II Peter* (1:1) identify themselves as “**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.**”
- Some argue that the Greek of *I Peter* is too refined for Peter, a fisherman by background, and therefore suspect another writer. Many speculate that this person was **Silas (Silvanus)** (*I Peter* 5:12), who delivered the letter and had previously been Paul’s missionary partner.
- Others believe that the false teachings described in *II Peter* 2 resemble **Gnosticism**, a movement that flourished in the second century, and therefore guess that the letter must have been written later.
- In reality, these theories lack solid evidence and are merely human speculation. Rather than guessing, it is better to accept Scripture with simple faith: “**Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote to...**”

Introduction to I & II Peter

2. Written to Churches Facing Internal and External Trials

- *I Peter — External Persecution*

At that time, the Roman government was persecuting Christians.

Many believers lost their lives and possessions, and the church's faith was severely tested. Peter wrote to encourage them: "...so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor..." (I Peter 1:7)

- *II Peter — Internal Corruption*

False prophets had infiltrated the church and gained the trust of some believers, causing destructive heresies to spread. Peter warned: "There will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them." (II Peter 2:1)

Introduction to I & II Peter

3. Themes

- **I Peter :**

*I Peter encourages a church suffering under persecution, urging them to stand firm by the grace of God. The purpose of the letter is stated clearly in 5:12: “**I have written to you... encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”***

- **II Peter :**

II Peter is Peter’s farewell message (1:14–15).

With the heart of an aged shepherd, he earnestly exhorts the church he loves to:

(1) Pursue spiritual growth ; (2) Guard against destructive heresies ; (3) Live in expectation of Christ’s return

Introduction to I & II Peter

4. Outline

• Outline of I Peter:

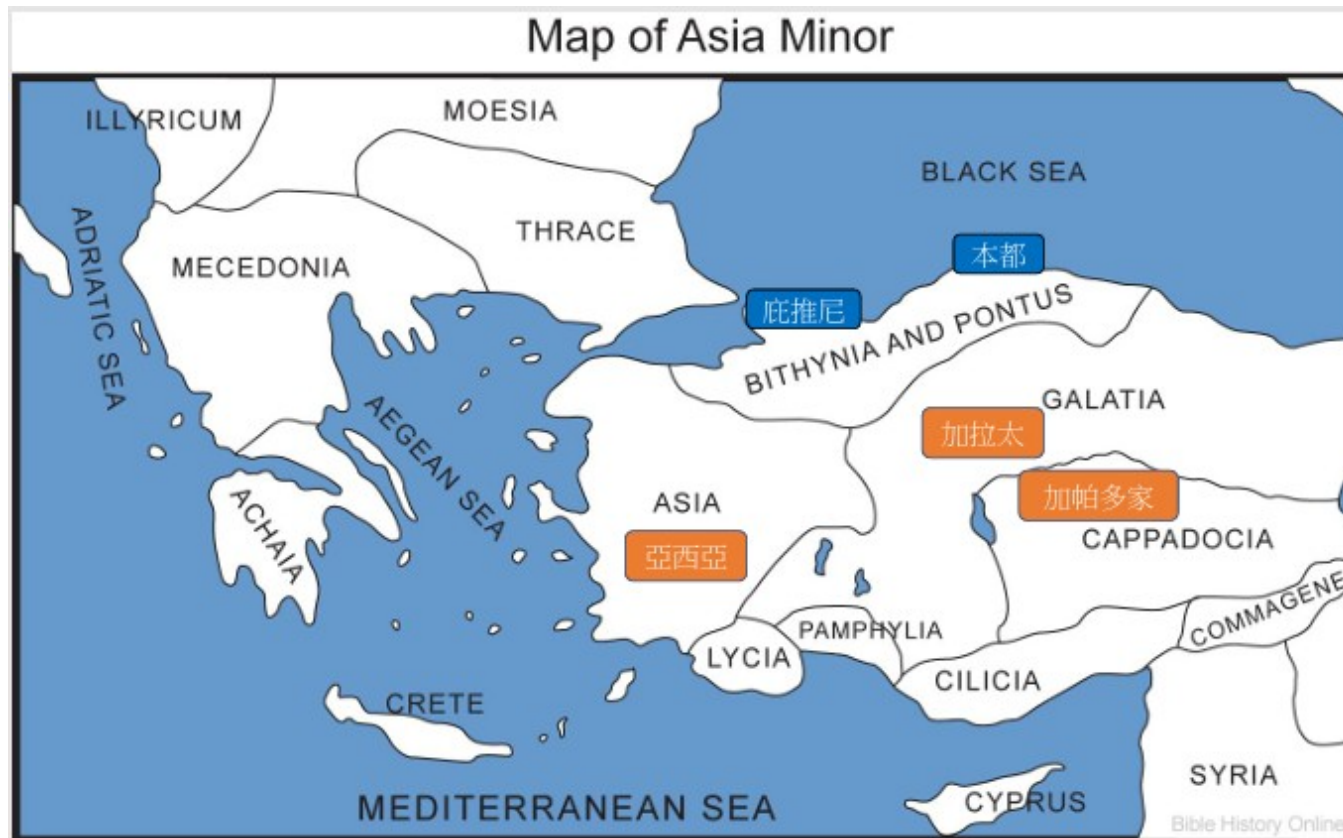
- 1) **Praise: God's Grace and Salvation** — 1:1–12
 - 2) **Exhortations: Live a Holy Life** — 1:13–5:11
 - a) **Be holy** — 1:13–2:13
 - b) **You are:** (1)Living stones ; (2)God's people ; (3)Strangers and exiles — 2:4–12
 - c) **Submit:** (1)To governing authorities ;(2)Servants to masters ; (3)Following Christ's example ;(4)Wives submit to husbands ;(5)Husbands honor their wives — 2:13–3:7
 - d) **Other exhortations** — 3:8–5:11
 - 3) **Blessing** — 5:12–14
-

Introduction to I & II Peter

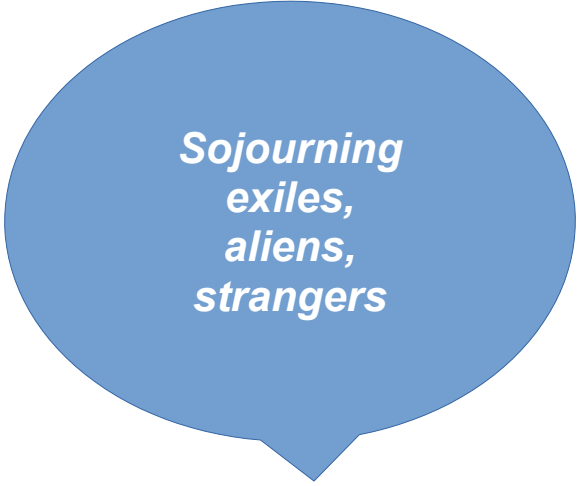
4. Outline

- **Outline of II Peter:**

- 1) *Pursue Spiritual Growth* — Chapter 1
 - 2) *Beware of Destructive Heresies* — Chapter 2
 - 3) *Look Forward to Christ's Return* — Chapter 3
-



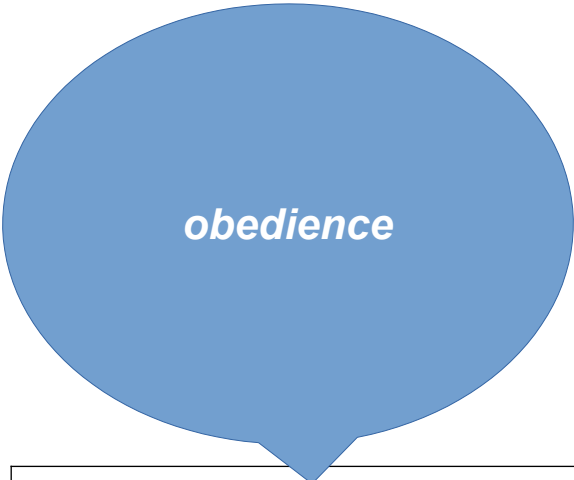
*The Five
Provinces in
I Peter 1:1*



Sojourning
exiles,
aliens,
strangers

- “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, **exiles** scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.” (1:1, NIV)
- “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass **the time of your sojourning** here in fear” (1:17, King James)
- “Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and **exiles**, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” (2:11, NIV)

- How should Christians view themselves while living in this world? Scripture teaches that we should see ourselves as **sojourners**, as **temporary residents** on earth. First Peter expresses this truth very clearly.
- Christians are people with an **awareness of eternal life**. Our true home is **in heaven**. Once we leave this temporary world of exile, we return to our eternal homeland.
- This does **not** mean that because our stay on earth is temporary, we may live carelessly. On the contrary, we must **cherish our days on earth** and live with seriousness and purpose. Not grasping for the world, but living as **citizens of heaven**, bearing witness for Jesus, and leading people to the heavenly Father.



obedience

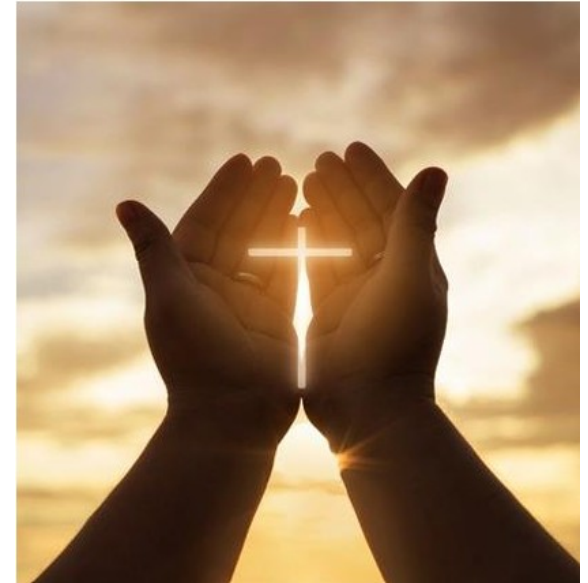
- “who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be **obedient to Jesus Christ** and sprinkled with his blood.” (1:2, NIV)
- “**As obedient children**, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.” (1:14, NIV)
- “Now that you have purified yourselves by **obeying the truth** so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.” (1:22, NIV)

- Scripture often uses another word to describe believing in the Lord: **obedience**. To believe in the Lord is to **obey** the Lord—chosen by the Father, sanctified by the Spirit, resulting in obedience to Jesus Christ.
- Obedience represents a **transfer of will**—no longer directing one’s life by one’s own will, but submitting to the will of the Lord. In your experience of coming to faith, have you undergone this transfer of will? Do you obey the Lord?
- In sin, a person lives in rebellion against God. Once we believe in the Lord, we turn from rebellion to obedience. Obedience is God’s **original design** for humanity. What was lost in Adam is restored in Christ.

The Relationship Between a Believer's Salvation and the Triune God

• Scripture: “Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood.” (1:2)

- **God the Father**: chooses believers according to His foreknowledge.
- **God the Spirit**: sanctifies believers—turning them away from sin and toward God.
- **God the Son**: believers obey (obedience and faith are synonymous) Jesus Christ and are sprinkled with His blood, which signifies cleansing and forgiveness.



➤ A person's salvation comes through being chosen by the Father according to His foreknowledge, being drawn and sanctified by the Spirit to turn to God, and believing in Jesus Christ, through whose blood the person is cleansed and forgiven.

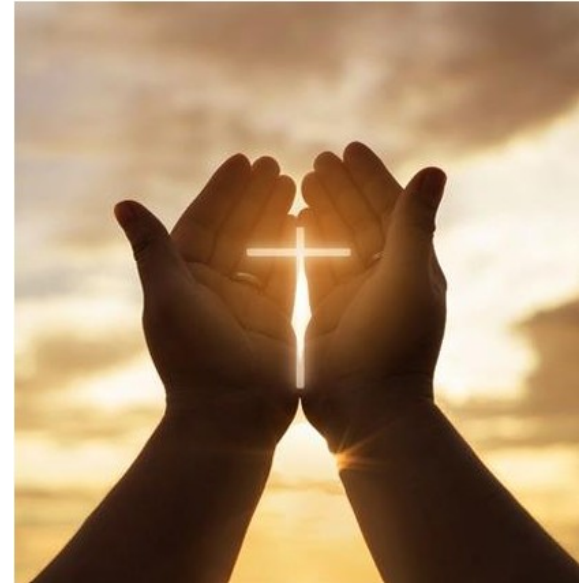
Understanding Salvation

1. Salvation is the grace of God

• **Scripture:** *“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1:3)*

- *We are born again and saved according to the great mercy of the Father.*
- *We are born again and saved through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He died for our sins and rose again, declaring with power that He is the Son of God, so that we may believe in Him and be born again.*

• **Conclusion:** *Salvation does not depend on us—it depends entirely on God’s grace. It is not about what you have done, but what Christ has done. Not your merit, but the cross of Jesus Christ. You do not need to strive in vain; you simply receive humbly.*

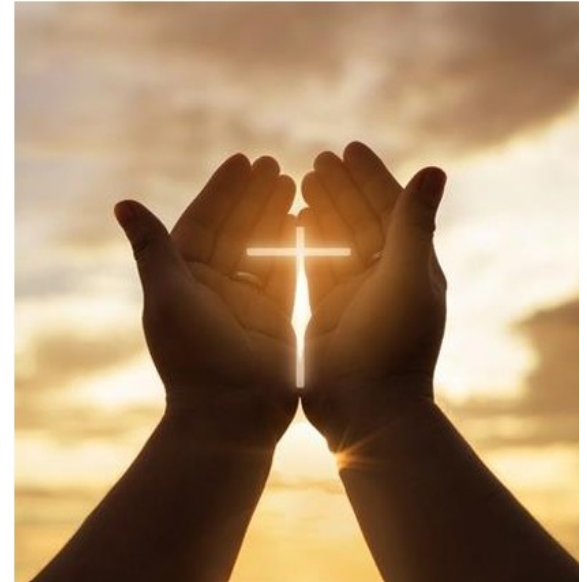


Understanding Salvation

2. Salvation is the outcome of faith

- Scripture:

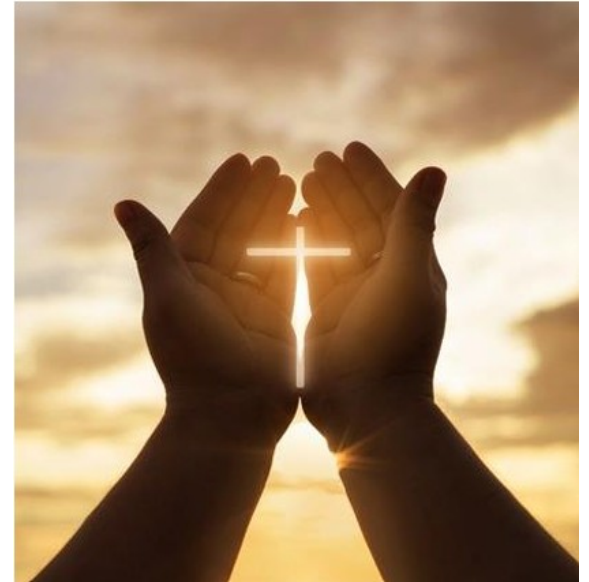
- “You who **through faith** are shielded by God’s power
- ... your **faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire
- ... you are receiving the end result of your **faith**, the salvation of your souls.” (1:5, 7, 9)



Understanding Salvation

2. Salvation is the outcome of faith

- 1) Salvation is God's grace. Grace is like a gift, and it must be received by faith—therefore salvation is also the result of faith.*
- 2) God protects those who have faith by His power.*
- 3) Faith will be tested (sometimes through trials). After passing the test, faith becomes even more precious.*

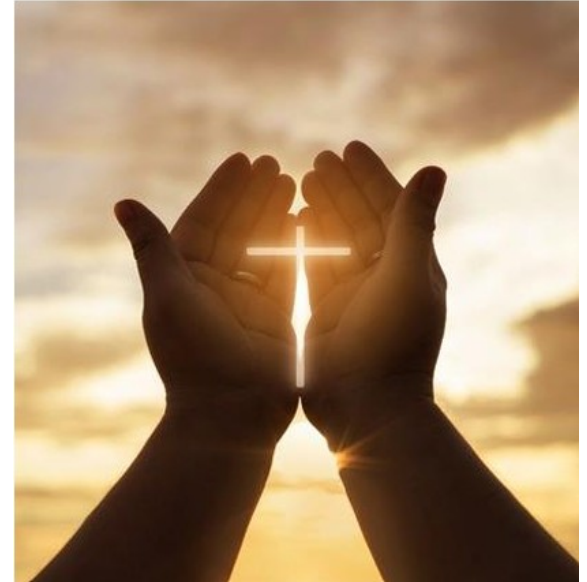


Understanding Salvation

3. Salvation is revealed through the gospel

- Scripture:

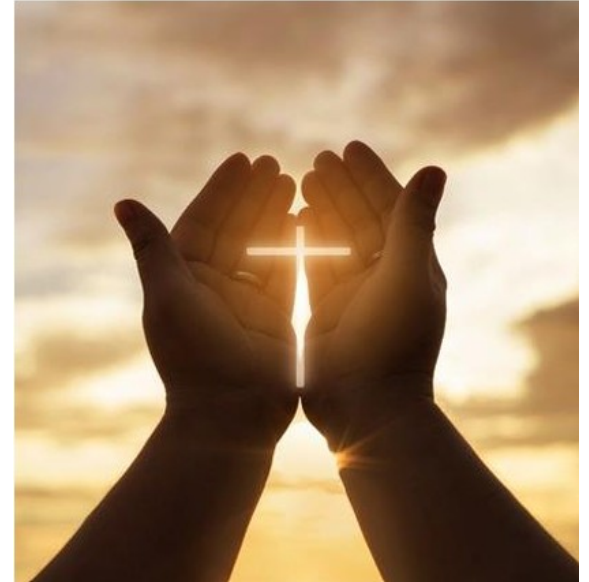
- *“Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you...**It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you.**”*
- *Those who **preached the gospel** to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven told you these things.*
- *Even angels long to look into these things.” (1:10–12)*

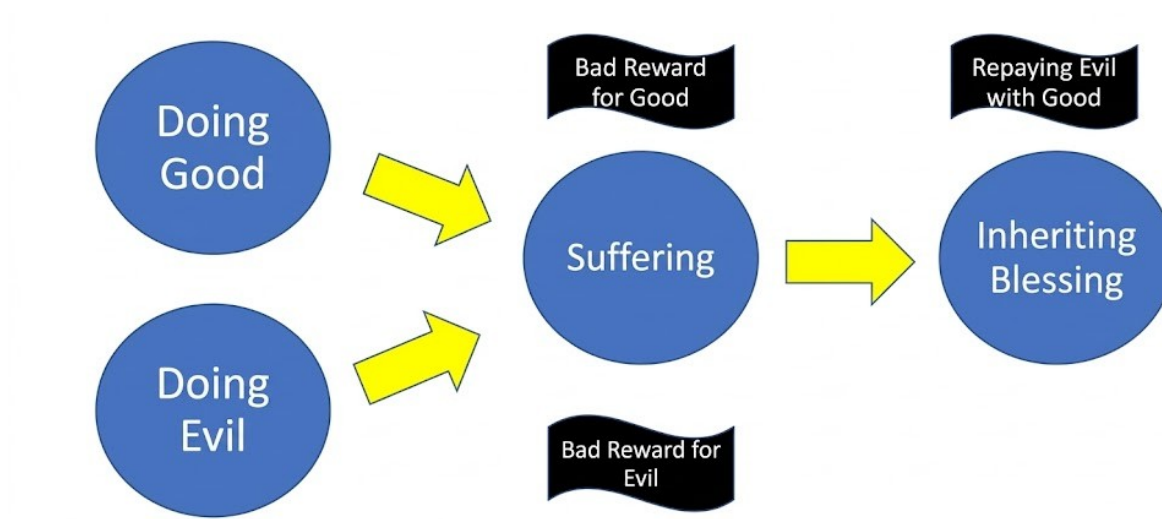


Understanding Salvation

3. Salvation is revealed through the gospel

- 1) *The prophets of old also spoke about salvation, but it was for future generations; they themselves did not fully understand it.*
- 2) *Even angels are curious and desire to understand the content of salvation.*
- 3) *Only those who preach the gospel—with “Jesus Christ and Him crucified” as the concrete message—proclaim salvation clearly and fully.*





- *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing...for this is what you were called to, so that you may inherit a blessing.(I Peter 3:9)*
- *If you are beaten for doing wrong and you endure it, what credit is that to you? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. For to this you were called. (I Peter 2:20-21a)*

Koinonia Fellowship in Christ's suffering

Suffering
with the
Lord

Suffering
for the
Lord

Suffering
for evil

Suffering
for good

- Dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:
- But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings (*koinonia*), that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
- If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.
- But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.
- Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.
(1 Peter 4:12-16)

W.Wang

The Apostle's Exhortations: "You must..."

- A key feature of *I Peter* is the repeated use of the phrase **"you must..."**
 - Throughout 1:13–5:11, the main body of the letter is composed of a series of imperative commands, showing the apostle's earnest exhortation.

1. You must gird up the loins of your mind

- **Scripture:** *"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be self-controlled, and set your hope fully on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed."* (1:13)
 - **Meaning:** To "gird up your loins" means **to gather strength and prepare for action**. Thus, "gird up the loins of your mind" means to focus your thoughts, concentrate your inner strength, and be ready at all times to live the Christian life.
-

The Apostle's Exhortations: "You must..."

2. You must be holy

- ***Scripture:*** *"Just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" (1:15–16)*
- ***Meaning:*** *In Scripture, holiness has two inseparable meanings:*
 - 1) ***Setting apart*** — *belonging exclusively to God. This is the primary meaning behind "a holy nation" and "set apart."*
 - 2) ***Moral purity*** — *not defiled by sin, not indulging in sinful desires.*
Because we belong to God (meaning 1), we must live differently from the world (meaning 2).

The Apostle's Exhortations: "You must..."

2. You must be holy

- *"Be holy, because I am holy" comes from the book of Leviticus.*

*Leviticus sets out Israel's **sacrificial system and way of life**, distinguishing them from the surrounding nations. In that context, holiness refers primarily to the first meaning—being set apart and belonging exclusively to God. But here in I Peter, the author is urging Christians not to indulge in sinful desires, emphasizing the second meaning—moral purity and godly character.*

The Apostle's Exhortations: "You must..."

- 3. You must abstain from fleshly desires***
- 4. You must show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, and honor the king.***
- 5. For the Lord's sake, you must submit to every human authority—whether to the emperor or to governors sent to punish evil and commend those who do right.***
- 6. Servants must submit to their masters with all respect.***
- 7. Wives must submit to their own husbands.***
- 8. Husbands must live with their wives considerately and with understanding.***

The Apostle's Exhortations: "You must..."

9. You must live in harmony with one another, Be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters, be compassionate and humble.

10. You must set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, Always be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope within you, with gentleness and reverence.

11. Since Christ suffered in the body, you must arm yourselves with the same mindset.

12. The end of all things is near; therefore, you must be self-controlled and alert in prayer.

13. Above all, you must love one another deeply, Because love covers (bears, carries) a multitude of sins.

14. You must offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

15. Each one must use whatever gift he has received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's varied grace.

The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

- In I Peter 2:4–12, the apostle uses the phrase “**you are**” three times to describe the identity of believers.

1. You are living stones

- Scripture: “The Lord is the living Stone... As you come to Him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

- Meaning: Stones are building materials; living stones are “**living building materials.**” Christians are living stones, and God uses many living stones to build a spiritual house—the church.

Each believer is both a living stone in God’s house and a priest within that house, offering spiritual sacrifices to the Father through Jesus Christ.



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

1. You are living stones

- **Application:**
- **Many living stones:** *Not one stone alone, but many joined together to form a living church. Are you connected with other believers, forming a spiritual community?*
- **Becoming priests:** *In this spiritual house, we offer sacrifices. Are you worshiping and serving God together with other believers in the name of Jesus Christ?*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

2. You are God’s people

- *Scripture: “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” (2:9)*
- *“You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself. Now if you fully obey Me and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:4–6)*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

2. You are God’s people

- **Meaning:** *I Peter 2:9 is extremely significant because it corresponds directly to Exodus 19:4–6 and reveals God’s purpose in saving His people.*
 1. *God saves us so that we may be His people, belonging exclusively to Him.*
 2. *Being God’s people is not self-chosen; it is the result of God’s election and His special grace.*
 3. *God’s people are priests—royal priests—who may draw near to the King of kings and stand before Him.*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

2. You are God’s people

- **Application:**
- **Faithful to God:** *Christians have a special identity—we belong to God alone. Treasure this relationship. Do not be double-minded like ancient Israel, wavering between God and idols.*
- **Declare His praises:** *God gives believers the privilege of proclaiming His excellencies. Receive His grace by faith, experience it, and share it with others so they too may be blessed.*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

3. You are sojourners in this world

- Scripture:
 - *“Dear friends, you are foreigners and exiles. I urge you to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.” (2:11)*
 - *“Live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.” (1:17)*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

3. You are sojourners in this world

- **Meaning:** *The Bible repeatedly reminds us that our eternal home is in heaven. This world is only a temporary dwelling place. Therefore, do not let worldly thinking or earthly anxieties fill your heart. Live your days on earth with reverence, turning away from sin and relying on God.*



The Identity of Christians: “You are...”

3. You are sojourners in this world

- **Application:**

- **Value spiritual things above earthly things:** *Care more about your relationship with God than about what you eat or wear.*

- **Value eternal things above temporary things:** *Care more about God’s kingdom, the progress of His work, and the salvation of others than about political changes or economic trends.*





Following in His Steps

*But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, **that you should follow in his steps.***

“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

*“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
(I Peter 2:20–25)*



Following in His Steps

- 1. Jesus suffered for doing good, and even in suffering He continued to do good.***
 - 2. Jesus bore the sins of others, so that we might die to sin and live in righteousness.***
 - 3. Jesus brings healing to those who come to Him.***
 - 4. Jesus is our Shepherd; we belong to Him—not to a religion, but to the living Christ.***
-

A Difficult and Confusing Passage

- Scripture:
 - “He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.” (I Peter 3:18–20)
 - Explanation:
 1. One interpretation says that during the period between Jesus’ death and His resurrection, He descended to the realm of the dead and preached to the people who had died in the time of the flood.
 2. Another interpretation says that Jesus did not go to preach the gospel, but rather went to make a proclamation of victory (kerusso — to proclaim, to announce, to publish).
-

A Difficult and Confusing Passage

- **Our Conclusion:**

We choose the ***second interpretation***.

The first interpretation seems to imply that people have a second chance to hear the gospel after death, which contradicts the overall teaching of Scripture.

*The second interpretation is more consistent: **Jesus went to make a victorious proclamation, not to preach the gospel for salvation.***



Baptism and Salvation

- ***Scripture:*** “This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves

you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (I Peter 3:21)

- ***Explanation:*** This passage contains a double symbolism:
 1. ***The flood symbolizes baptism,***
 2. ***And baptism symbolizes salvation.***

However, baptism itself does not save a person. It is “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” that salvation comes. Baptism does not wash away physical dirt; rather, it represents “a good conscience before God.”

A believer who refuses baptism carries a troubled conscience, but one who receives baptism has a clear conscience, because baptism is the proper response of someone who has already believed in Christ.