

# FIRST PETER

## Chapter 2

*A Living Stone and a Holy People*

**So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation — 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. 4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.” 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” 8 and “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.” They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. 9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 11 Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. 12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.**

**2:1** so. Connects the exhortations that follow with 1:23–25; compare “born again” (1:23) with “newborn babies” (2:2). (CSB)

*put away* – By daily contrition and repentance the Christian lives in a constant state of grace. (TLSB)

The contents of the antecedent, which is also a constituent part of the exhortation, is by means of “wherefore” inferred from what has preceded. We Christians are born again by means of the Word (1:22-23), have purified our souls by obedience to the truth and that means of unfeigned love for the brethren. To be sure, in conversion we have not completely laid aside the old evil nature. Nevertheless, the new birth qualifies and obligates us continually to cleanse ourselves from the evil, selfish lusts of the old man. The wicked actions mentioned here are the opposite of genuine brotherly love. (Stoeckhardt)

The apostle here continues the admonitions which he began in chapter 1, placing the old evil life of the unconverted in opposition to the sanctification of the believers: Laying aside, then, all wickedness, all guile and hypocrisy and envy, and all slanderings, like newly born infants yearn after the spiritual, unadulterated milk, that by it you may grow unto salvation. The sins which the apostle mentions in the first verse are characteristic of the unconverted state, but are incompatible with true sanctification. (Kretzmann)

*malice* – That poisonous attitude that takes delight in other people’s suffering. Replace it with compassion, a willingness to help other people carry their burdens. (PBC)

There is wickedness, or malice, whose constant aim is to harm one's neighbor. (Kretzmann)

*deceit* – Wanting things badly enough to lie or use tricks, or evading responsibility. Replace it with honesty and openness, telling people the truth in love. (PBC)

There is, as an expression of this malice, guile, which tries to reach its selfish object by deceiving one's neighbor. (Kretzmann)

*hypocrisy* – Concealing your true feelings, only pretending to care about other people, faking friendship. Replace it with sincere love and genuine concern. (PBC)

Hypocrisy always assumes a garb to cloak the real condition of the heart and mind. (Kretzmann)

*envy* – Jealousy of other people's lives and possessions, disappointment with your own lot in life, and resentment toward God for "cheating" you, as though you deserve better. Replace it with alertness of God's blessings, contentment with your life, and joyful thanksgiving to a loving Father. (PBC)

Envy begrudges one's neighbor everything that the goodness or the mercy of the Lord has given him. (Kretzmann)

*slander* – Enjoying running down, putting down, cutting down other people. Replace it with praise and encouragement for other people, finding joy in their successes. (PBC)

A culmination of them all, slanderings, backbitings, cleverly composed speeches which are intended to detract from the good name of one's neighbor. All these vices should be laid aside, put off, because it interferes with the Christian's growth in holiness and will certainly kill faith in his heart. (Kretzmann)

**2:2 like newborn infants** – As an infant craves its mother's milk, so Christians crave God's nourishing Word. (TLSB)

Instead of that, the true believers will be found like infants that have just been born, like sucklings. (Kretzmann)

Christians, as newborn children, should desire spiritually pure milk in order that they might develop and reach maturity. This does not say that the readers had just lately become Christian and were, therefore, still in need of milk, rather than in need of solid food as were mature Christians. (Stoeckhardt)

*long for*. The unrestrained hunger of a healthy baby provides an example of the kind of eager desire for spiritual food that ought to mark the believer. (CSB)

For just as a healthy baby at that age is eager for its nourishment, practically hungry all the time, so the Christians should have an insatiable longing for the milk of the Word, for the nourishment which is the proper food for all believers from their conversion to their death. (Kretzmann)

*pure* – It is ironic that some people spend a great deal of energy scrutinizing the labels of the food they buy, preferring food that are organically grown, wary of chemicals and additives, and yet are careless about the official teachings of the church they join and the denomination to which they belong. (PBC)

There could be no question among the readers that Peter had in mind the Word of God with this expression. God's Word is the seed of conversion and the food of the converted. God's Word is pure, without falsehood, without deceit, means it only well for man, aims only at our welfare and salvation. (Stoeckhardt)

*spiritual milk*. Probably referring to God's word (1:23, 25). The author is speaking figuratively. Milk is not to be understood here as in 1Co 3:2; Heb 5:12–14—in unfavorable contrast to solid food—but as an appropriate nourishment for babies. (CSB)

This Word of the Gospel is a spiritual milk, which, as Luther writes, the soul must draw and the heart seek; and it is a pure, unadulterated milk, it should be used just as it is found in Scriptures, without the slightest addition of man's wisdom. (Kretzmann)

This wonderful spiritual food helps us taste how good it is to be loved and saved. (PBC)

*grow up*. The Greek for this phrase is the standard term for the desirable growth of children. (CSB)

New converts may have a minimal knowledge of Christian teachings, but all Christians should strive to mature in their faith, which leads to the full blessings of salvation. Luther: "The milk is nothing but the Gospel, which is also the vey seed by which we are conceived and born, as we heard above. This is also the food that nourishes us when we grow up; it is the armor which we put on and with which we equip ourselves. Yes, it is everything put together. But the admixture is the human doctrines with which the Word of God is adulterated. (AE 30:48-49) (TLSB)

Through this mental and spiritual food, the Word of the Gospel, the growth of the Christian takes place, the growth in grace, the growth in faith, the growth in sanctification, unto salvation. The Word works in us pure, holy, wholesome thoughts, wishes, and works, it gives us the strength both to will and to do according to the good pleasure of our heavenly Father. (Kretzmann)

Man alters natural food when he eats it, in his body, in flesh and blood. On the other hand, by means of the spiritual food of God's Word the man who lays hold on it is changed into the character and nature of the food. God's food makes man just like the food itself: clean, godly, chaste, and pure, impels him to be faithful to God and man, sincerely to serve and to please God and neighbor. (Stoeckhardt)

We are to long for the wholesome spiritual nourishment we find in God's Word, just as infants seek the nourishment they find in milk. That milk provides just what their growing bodies need at that tender stage of life. We also need to express the same longing for the spiritual nourishment of God's Word that we may grow. This is particularly true of new believers, such as those Peter was addressing. Still, even mature Christians find their solid food in God's Word (Heb. 5:12-14). In any case, Peter may have had this psalm verse in mind when he spoke of good the kindness of the Lord tasted: "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps. 34:38) (LifeLight)

**2:3** *have tasted*. The tense of the Greek verb used here suggests that an initial act of tasting is referred to. Since this taste has proved satisfactory, the believers are urged to long for additional spiritual food. (CSB)

Infants are satisfied by their mother's milk. Christians likewise find that God's Word satisfies their deepest needs. (TLSB)

The note on Psalm 34:8 says, “Perceive. This is an invitation for the saints to experience the Lord’ trustworthiness. If you do not taste, you will not see. (TLSB)

In order to call the attention of his readers to the importance of this food and of the growth thereby, the apostle refers to an Old Testament passage: If, indeed, you have tasted that good is the Lord. Ps. 34:9. He assumes as a matter of course that the Christians have enjoyed the food to which he has referred. But the excellence of this food is in itself an incentive for the believers to be eager for the proper spiritual growth. The very first taste of the goodness, of the kindness of the Lord, as shown in the Word of His grace, is bound to make the Christian eager for more of this wonderful benevolence, for more of this glorious news of the forgiveness of sins through Christ. Thus the faith that accepts and holds Christ is increased and strengthened through the Word, and out of this strength there flows, in turn, a truly righteous demeanor, true goodness of heart, Christian kindness and benevolence. (Kretzmann)

The theme of Christian interaction with the world is central to 1 Peter. Since Peter is exhorting the newly baptized, the boundaries of separation between Christian and world need to be reinforced, since believers continue to interact with the world in many areas, including their own households. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

The heart of vv 4-10 is a midrash based primarily on Is 28:16 and secondarily on several other biblical texts cited below. By drawing together these OT texts, Peter says the Gentile communities are the new Israel and the fulfillment of the OT institutions of the temple, monarchy, and priesthood. These images are concretized in the One who transcends ethnic boundaries: Jesus Christ, the cornerstone. Christ’s atoning sacrifice is implied in the image of the stone, since stones were used for altars (Ex 20:25, etc.) as well as the Jerusalem temple. The church is not a lifeless, literalistic fulfillment, but a “living” and “spiritual” fulfillment (2:5), even as Christ Himself is the new temple infused with resurrection life (John 2:19-22) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

Here is introduced an entirely new concept: the idea of a spiritual house. Previous exhortations were directed to individual Christian. Now believing Christian appear to be united into a whole, into a congregation. The idea of a house, a temple, runs over into another, into one of a holy priesthood. (Stoeckhardt)

**2:4** *as you come to him* – The Greek means “to whom coming,” “approaching”: continuous action possibly related to a previous verse. The Word of God draws us to Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

This entire paragraph refers to the Lord, of whom St. Peter had spoken in verse 3. Making use of a new figure or picture, the apostle writes: To whom coming, to that living Stone, rejected indeed of men, but chosen on the part of God, precious. The Christians have become partakers of the new spiritual birth, they are children of God. Mindful, therefore, of the sacred obligations and privileges which their new state lays upon them, they will come to the Lord, they will be joined to Him, they will range themselves on His side. (Kretzmann)

In the original “to whom coming” has the sense of “to attach oneself to someone”. The apostle exhorts Christians to attach themselves to Christ, who offers Himself to them in the Word. This attachment to Christ is nothing else than faith in Christ, synonymous with “believing on Him” (v. 6) . (Stoeckhardt)

*living Stone.* Christ The Stone is living in that it is personal. Furthermore he is a life-giving Stone. Christ as the Son of God has life in himself (Jn 1:4; 5:26). See also “living water” (Jn 4:10–14; 7:38), “living bread” (Jn 6:51) and “living way” (Heb 10:20). (CSB)

Cf vv 6–8. The people of God are the temple in which He dwells; Christ is the cornerstone. (TLSB)

These former-pagans-turned-disciples must have found it strange to find themselves suddenly part of a holy temple, a royal priesthood. And yet that is what being set apart by the Gospel does. We look strange and out of place to those who do not understand or believe. (LifeLight)

They know that their Lord, Jesus, Christ, is the living Stone, Ps. 118, 22; Is. 28, 16, the Source of all spiritual life, and that they can retain their own life only in proportion as they remain in fellowship with Him. (Kretzmann)

Not a natural rock, but a stone cut for a special use. Exodus 20:25 prohibits the use of dressed stone for altars, perhaps to prevent images from being inscribed on the (First Commandment). For the Jerusalem temple, Solomon used stone dressed only at the quarry (1 King 5:17; 6:7) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

Stones are dead; we even say “stone-dead.” This fact makes the paradox of the living stone all the greater. (Lenski)

*rejected by men but chosen by God.* Peter repeatedly makes a contrast in Acts between the hostility of unbelieving men toward Jesus and God’s exaltation of him (Ac 2:22–36; 3:13–15; 4:10–11; 10:39–42). (CSB)

God often does his most wonderful works by instruments which the world rejects. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

This living Stone, Jesus the Messiah, was indeed rejected by the builders, by the leaders of the Jewish nation, by men in general, for most of them concur with the Jews in rejecting the Savior. (Kretzmann)

*chosen and precious* – These words used for select cuts of hewn stone or for gemstones, take on a deep theological significance in God’s election of Jesus as the instrument of salvation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

The Father chose His own dear Son to be our Savior. This is God’s eternal plan. (TLSB)

But the judgment of God does not agree with that of the blinded world, for He has chosen this Stone as a most precious stone, as the Headstone of the corner, Is. 8, 16. This fact, that Christ, although scorned and despised by the children of the world, is given such great honors in the sight of God, should encourage the Christians at all times to set aside the scornful attitude of the world and accept the judgment of the Lord instead. (Kretzmann)

**2:5 living stones.** † Believers are not literal pieces of rock, but are persons. In addition, they derive their life from Christ, who is the original living Stone to whom they have come (v. 4), the “life-giving spirit” (1Co 15:45). These references to stones may well reflect Jesus’ words to Peter (Mt 16:18), in the sense that a believer’s faith, as implied in Peter’s confession, rests on Christ. (CSB)

This identifies the community of the baptized as built on the foundation of the Living Stone, and as “living stones” themselves. The life of the Living Stone is in the lives of the stones. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

We become little stones, and it is Christ’s goal to mortar us together into a grand building call the holy Christian church. Isn’t it interesting that we are called stones rather than bricks? Bricks are all alike; stones are all different – in color, texture, size, and shape. But there is a place for all in God’s building. (PBC)

The Christians who hear the Gospel, are those who are built and the stones one must join to this Cornerstone, so that we place our confidence in Him and our hearts rest and repose in Him. (Luther)

With the reference to Christ as the living Stone agrees the description of the believers: And yourselves like living stones be built up as a spiritual house, unto a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. In order to remain in fellowship with the Corner-stone, Christ, it is necessary that the believers partake of His nature, be filled with His life. (Kretzmann)

*spiritual house.* The house is spiritual in a metaphorical sense, but also in that it is formed and indwelt by the Spirit of God. Every stone in the house has been made alive by the Holy Spirit, sent by the exalted living Stone, Jesus Christ (cf. Ac 2:33). The OT temple provides the background of this passage (cf. Jn 2:19; 1Co 3:16; Eph 2:19–22). (CSB)

The Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit, where He dwells. (TLSB)

We joined or built ourselves upon Christ when we became Christians. At that time Christ, the Living Stone, drew us unto Himself. And so the intent of the apostolic exhortation is for Christians to let themselves be built unto a spiritual house. If one asks how this happens or should happen, the answer lies in the words: “since you are attaching yourselves to this one”. Since Christians attach themselves to Christ in faith, build themselves upon Him, they unite themselves into a uniform building. Since one stone upon another adds itself to the Cornerstone, the house is surely built. What the apostle demands of Christians is basically one thing, that they believe in Christ, grow and increase in faith through diligent use of God’s living Word. If they do this, then the summons “let yourselves be built upon into a spiritual house” is fulfilled. (Stoekhardt)

It is then, and then only, that they can be built up as a spiritual house, their faith sinking deeply and ever more deeply into this unshakable foundation of His eternal love, their mutual faith uniting them in mutual love, connecting them in one vast organization. In this way the Christians are built up as a spiritual house, built up on Christ and in Christ, unto a holy priesthood. The apostle is here describing the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the sum total of all the believers in Christ, an edifice of living persons filled with the Spirit of God. (Kretzmann)

*oikos pneumatikos* – This centers the thoughts of Gentile Christians on the household of faith, its profoundly spiritual nature, and its foundation in Christ. These house-based communities, in mostly urban environments, followed a pattern familiar to the Greco-Roman society of the time. Clubs, organizations, workers guilds, and the immigrant groups gathered in cities in this way since they had insufficient status to us favored public spaces and insufficient funds to build private facilities. A house church established under the blessing of a patron was an acceptable way for the a new institution to enter the life of a city. As Christian house-based communities

grew, so might tensions. The honored patron (or patroness) might well house a mixed group under one roof. Reciprocity (You scratch my back; I'll scratch yours") was the established model and could easily lead to a dilution of ideals and practices. So the apostles exhorted Christian communities to understand themselves much like other "aliens and immigrants: forming their house-based groups. While Christians interacted with the world on a daily basis and desired that their institution be accepted by the world, they were to abhor and abstain from the many immoral practices of that world, and this created tensions in communal living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

As Peter was writing this letter, the one thousand-year existence of the Jerusalem temple was about to come to an end. (PBC)

Ephesians 2:20-21, "20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord."

*holy priesthood.* The whole body of believers. As priests, believers are to (1) reflect the holiness of God and that of their high priest (see 1:15; Heb 7:26; 10:10), (2) offer spiritual sacrifices (here), (3) intercede for man before God and (4) represent God before man. (CSB)

All Christians are priests, having direct access to God through Christ. (TLSB)

The function of the NT priests is to bring spiritual offerings unto God, before whom they stand and walk. Just as Christians, each according to his own person, are born again by, and are filled with, the Spirit of God – therefore, build a spiritual house and are spiritual priest – so also their offerings are spiritual, stem from the Spirit, are wrought and are permeated by the Spirit of God. These are no longer sin and atonement offerings since through the one offering of Christ was completely atoned, but they are offerings of praise and thanks. (Stoeckhardt)

Every member of this Church is incidentally a priest of God in the sacred edifice which is erected upon Christ. Whereas in the Old Testament there was a special hierarchy, composed of members of the house of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, Heb. 5, 1, there is now, by virtue of the vicarious action of Christ, a general priesthood of believers. Every Christian has direct and free access to God, because the sin which formerly divided between us and God has been removed by Christ. Of this priestly dignity the believers should always be conscious; they should keep their relation toward God intact and ever draw more closely to the heavenly throne. (Kretzmann)

This is the true priesthood. As we have heard, it embraces these three things: to offer spiritual sacrifices, to pray for the congregation, and to preach. (Luther)

In his writings regarding the priesthood of all believers Luther makes this point several times: Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood...and there is no difference at all between clergy and laity except that of office. During his earthly sojourn with Jesus, Peter boasted of his self-sufficiency: "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will" (Mt. 26:33). He had learned that a disciple cannot live in isolation from the others. Paul devotes considerable time sketching the same truth that the body is not member but many (1 Cor. 12:12-26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

This involves sacrifices. In this case they involve proper worship and holy living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

Our holy relation to God as His holy and royal priesthood makes us foreigners to the profane world. (Lenski)

We have become not only part of the great temple of God, but we are made priest in that temple, holy priests, holy through the blood of the Lamb. (PBC)

Hebrews 13:15-16, <sup>15</sup> Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. <sup>16</sup> And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

*spiritual sacrifices.* The NT refers to a variety of offerings: bodies offered to God (Ro 12:1), offerings of money or material goods (Php 4:18; Heb 13:16), sacrifices of praise to God (Heb 13:15) and sacrifices of doing good (Heb 13:16). (CSB)

Christians should thank God from the heart and with the mouth. Christians should also render thanks to God through their works. To the spiritual offerings of the New Covenant belong all good works, works that flow from the Spirit and from faith and by which Christian praise their Father in heaven. (Stoekhardt)

At the same time, all these spiritual priests should be active in offering to the Lord such spiritual sacrifices as are well-pleasing to God. The entire life of a Christian, all his thoughts, desires, and deeds, are such sacrifices, because it is the Spirit of God that lives in them and teaches them to be duly grateful to the Lord for the gifts of His salvation, both in hymns of praise and in good works, Rom. 12:1. (Kretzmann)

The OT temple and altar with their rituals and sacrifices are replaced not by a new set of rituals and shrines, but by the self-giving of a person, the very Son of God. Henceforth, true worship pleasing to the Father is none other than the saving life, death, and resurrection of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

These sacrifices that God invite us to bring have nothing to do with sprinkling blood or burning incense, and they do not need to be offered in one particular place, such as Mount Zion in Jerusalem. We offer our bodies as spiritual sacrifices, dedicating our entire lives to His service. (PBC)

Priests offer sacrifices; thus Christians offer the sacrifices of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. These are acceptable to God because of the greatest sacrifice, Jesus Christ (cf Heb 9–10). Luther: “Since Christ is the Groom and we are the bride, the bride has everything that the Groom has, even His own body. When He gives Himself to the bride, He gives Himself entirely as what He is; and the bride, in turn, also gives herself to Him” (AE 30:53). (TLSB)

*acceptable to God.* Through the work of our Mediator, Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 14:6). Believers are living stones that make up a spiritual temple in which, as a holy priesthood, they offer up spiritual sacrifices. (CSB)

That is the charge of 1 Peter 2. We are to live each day as if we are playing for the King – for we are! We are “elect,” chosen by God (Deut. 7:6-9; Is. 44:3:10, 20; 44:1-2). We are part of a priestly team. As priests, we may come into God’s presence, bringing prayers and sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. It is a royal priesthood because Jesus, the great High Priest, has decided to possess us. We have been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23), the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 5 1:19). (LifeLight)

Serving God in the NT is, according to Romans 12:1, reduced to this that Christians give their lives as offering to God, that each Christian places his body with all its members and skills: eyes, ears, mouth, tongue, hands, and feet, himself with everything that he is and has, into the service of God. (Stoeckhardt)

These spiritual offerings are pleasing to God through Jesus Christ. Certainly, everything that comes from the Spirit and is spiritually oriented is pleasing to God. Yet since the flesh with its aversion, reluctance, indolence, unconcern, vanity, selfishness, still clings to the Christians and to their good works while God desires perfect offerings, their works and offerings are yet perfectly pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, who by His perfect merit covers all their deficiencies. (Stoeckhardt)

**2:6** Is 28:16 prophesies that though Jerusalem would be destroyed, God would build a new Jerusalem that could not be destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled in the creation of the Church. (TLSB)

*a cornerstone chosen and precious.* See Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11. This is an obvious reference to Christ, as vv. 6b–8 make clear. The cornerstone, which determined the design and orientation of the building, was the most significant stone in the structure. The picture that Peter creates is of a structure made up of believers (living stones, v. 5), the design and orientation of which are all in keeping with Christ, the cornerstone. – The word here refers either to a massive cornerstone placed at the upper corner of the building in order to bind the walls firmly together, or it refers to the keystone in the middle of the archway. (CSB)

Peter goes to three majestic OT prophecies that describe the Messiah as a stone. The first is from Isaiah 28:16, in which God the Father proclaims that the real foundation of the people of God is not a block of granite, not an “it” but a “Him.” The Father placed somebody as the cornerstone, and everyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame. Each of these three OT prophecies describes Christ as a different kind of stone. The first is as a cornerstone. Today the laying a cornerstone has a mostly ceremonial purpose. The real structural value of the cornerstone, if you are a stone mason, is to serve as a point of reference for the straightness of the building. The cornerstone is the first and also the largest, stone above grade. That first stone will determine the straightness of the building lines of depth, width, and height. If the cornerstone is off a little, the whole building will end up looking crooked. (PBC)

In Support of these statements the apostle does not quote an Old Testament passage outright, but makes it the basis of an explanation in which he uses also other texts: For it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a Stone, a Corner-stone, chosen, precious; and he that believes on Him shall not be brought to shame. Cf. Is. 28:16. Note that the reference is to a book which is a definite, well-known entity, which went by the name “Scripture” and was generally conceded to be the Word of God. The gist, or tenor, of the passage in Isaiah is given. In Zion, in His Church of the New Testament, the Lord places or appoints a Corner-stone, one that is at the same time a Rock of Salvation. For not one person that puts his trust in Him will be found ashamed on the last day. The congregation of believers that is built up on this Stone shall not be overcome even by the portals of hell. (Kretzmann)

Now I have also stated what the building is. It is faith. Through faith we are placed on Christ, put our trust in this Stone, and thus become like Him. And this must take place in such a way that the building fits together; for the others stones must all be adjusted and arranged according to this Stone. This is love, a fruit of faith. (Luther)

Christ is the cornerstone because He brought the Gentiles and the Jews, who were mortal enemies, together. Thus the Christian Church was gathered from both. (Luther)

Everything that does not rest on this foundation will have to fall. But only he who relies on it will not be put to shame; he will remain, and no power can harm him. (Luther)

*the one who trusts in him.* Two attitudes toward the cornerstone are evident: (1) Some trust in him; (2) others reject him (v. 7) and, as a result, stumble and fall (v. 8). (CSB)

*will not be put to shame* –The congregation of believers, which is built upon this Rock, will not be overpowered by the gates of hell; it is a building solidly constructed; it moves onward towards heavenly salvation. (Stoekhardt)

Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

2 Timothy 2:19, “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

**2:7 honor** – Citizenship in the new Jerusalem is not something earned; it is a gift of God that honors us. (TLSB)

*cornerstone* – Peter’s second stone metaphor is drawn from Psalm 118:22, the psalm that the adoring crowds on Palm Sunday chanted to their Messiah. – A capstone (or keystone) is the wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch. Roman architecture was one of the greatest achievements of Roman civilization, and Rome’s architects and engineers had developed the arch into their trademark. An arch or series of arches was not only beautiful, but it provided a brilliant way to pierce a load-bearing wall for doors or light without weakening the wall. In the same way, suffering Christians need to be reminded that Christ Jesus is the capstone of our lives. If He is knocked out of that position, our lives collapse. (PBC)

The apostle now makes his application of the prophetic passage: To you, then, that believe He is preciousness; but as for the unbelievers, the Stone which the builders rejected, this has become the Corner-stone, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, who stumble at the Word, being disobedient, where unto also they were appointed. C. Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14. In the case of all believers, in which number Peter pointedly and emphatically includes his readers, the living Stone, Jesus Christ, the Rock of Salvation, is preciousness; they partake of the wonderful value of this Stone, and should properly appreciate the honor which is thereby conferred upon them. Altogether different is the case with the unbelievers. To them that prophecy of the rejection of the Corner-stone applies, for they follow the Jews in their blind foolishness, in scorning the one way of salvation, through the redemption of Christ Jesus. (Kreztmann)

This wondrous stone means everything also to any and to all who refuse to believe: their rejection is fatal to them. In the first place, God nullifies this rejection and makes this stone the corner-head; in the second place, this stone destroys them. (Lanski)

**2:8 a stone of stumbling** – To stumble literally means to strike against something so that one stumbles and falls. Since they will not build upon him, desire not to believe in Christ and be saved by him, the inevitable result is that they rush headlong into him, as they would an

abomination, become more hostile to him as time goes on, and in the end fall prey to destruction, even to eternal damnation. – Peter’s final stone metaphor is drawn from Isaiah 8:14, and it sends a chill down your spine. Jesus does not like to be rejected and thrown on the ground. When that happens, the rejected capstone becomes a stumbling stone, that is, Hw will move Himself to trip these proud builders so that they come crashing down. Christ promises unlimited blessings to all who put their trust in Him. But He promises unlimited curses on those who disobey and disbelieve the gospel message. (PBC)

And therefore they, who should have been built up with the saints, in their blind enmity stumble over this Stone, trip over this Rock, since they refuse to be obedient to the Word, to accept the truth of the Gospel. They stumble, they fall, they perish in the destruction which their stubborn refusal of salvation has brought upon themselves. (Kretzmann)

For the unbelieving He is in the bad sense of the word a Cornerstone, against whose sharp edges they rush and are shattered. These words do not mean that Christ contributes, as some believe, to the unbeliever’s destruction. (Stoeckhardt)

“To stumble” literally means to strike against something so that one stumbles and falls, and “stumbling” is the obstacle on which one trips causing the fall. In a figurative sense the words are used in classical Greek of moral failure and cause for moral failures. (Stoeckhardt)

A slight variance of this concept is found in later Greek, where “to stumble” means as much as to take offense, to feel oneself repulsed, to become weary, become unwilling, to deter from, to abhor, and “stumbling” itself is the object of aversion and ill-will. (Stoeckhardt)

Christ has become to unbelievers, and will continue to be to them, a Stone of stumbling and Rock of offense. (What will you do with Jesus?) This Stone is laid in their way; they cannot find their way around it. And since they will not build upon Him, desire not to believe in Christ and be saved by Him, the inevitable result is that they rush headlong into Him, abhor Him as they would an abomination, become more hostile to Him as time goes on, and in the end fall prey to destruction even to eternal destruction. Religious leaders of Jesus day) This destruction-causing onset against Christ, this vexation towards Christ is the final fruit of unbelief, is unbelief reaching its highest potential. (Stoeckhardt)

The Jews stumble over this Stone to this day, and they will continue to do so until the Last Day comes. Then the Stone will fall on all unbelievers and crush them. (Luther)

Hebrews 2:3, “how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.”

*they disobey* – Is 8:14 explains that although Christ was to be a sanctuary for Judah and Israel, those who rejected Him would fall in unbelief and be crushed. (TLSB)

They harden their own hearts against every effort of the Spirit to reveal the Savior to them. And thus the judgment is carried out in their case; their unbelief condemns them. They come under that terrible sentence of God according to which those that harden their hearts in spite of all calling of the Lord are finally appointed to that lot that the Word of Salvation becomes to them a savor of death unto death. It would hardly be possible to warn against the sin of unbelief in a more emphatic way. (Kretzmann)

For this reason they will not see eternal life, the consequence – not the cause – of their obduracy: “Whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (Jn. 3:18). It is not possible to be neutral toward Christ. He is for all persons either Savior or Destroyer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The unbelieving take offense at Christ. But how and when do they even come into contact with Christ? Answer: Through the Word about Christ, through the Gospel, which is preached to Jew and Gentiles throughout the countries of the world. In this selfsame Word, in which Christ presents Himself to the believers and lets them see and experience His blessings (2:3), He draws nigh unto all who are within hearing distance. How man relates to the Word will dictate his attitude to Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

The unbelievers are called here “disobedient”. Being disobedient, as being disobedient to the Gospel is unbelief. The Word of Christ has come to the attention of many unbelievers, but they have rejected it. They vigorously opposed the saving effect of the Word and so stumble and become annoyed at the Word. Yet they cannot toss it out of their minds completely. And the closer their contact with the Word, the greater is their feeling of repulsion, the greater becomes their nausea and loathing for the same unto their eternal loss and damnation. (Stoeckhardt)

*as they were destined for.* † Peter means that unbelief is destined to result in eternal destruction. (CSB)

Unless they repent and come to faith, sin will destroy them (e.g., Judas). (TLSB)

So Simeon’s prophet words to Mary: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel” (Luke 2:34). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The unbelievers, who absolutely choose not to obey the Word, are according to God’s righteous judgment and appointed to become more and more soured and hardened through the Word, that for them the Word of salvation becomes a smell of death unto death. In the end God surrenders them to their corrupt hardened disposition. More earnest could the apostle not be in his warning against unbelief, against contempt for the Gospel. (Stoeckhardt)

From Portals of Prayer – May 3, 2012...

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. – John 3:17

Do I have to share heaven with him?

Eeewww! Children say this when they see something particularly disgusting. Among the OT kings (and ancestors of Jesus!), there is one king who deserves the word particularly well. Manasseh was the son of good king Hezekiah. But what a contrast he was father! Idolatry, blasphemy, murder, witchcraft and necromancy, even burning his own children alive as offerings to false gods. Surely if ever a man were a hopeless case, it was he. And yet we are told that in the end, he repented and God forgave and restored him. (2 Chronicles 33:1-19) Eeewww!

We might say, “That man’s sin is too horrible. Do not forgive him Lord!” Who wants Manasseh as a neighbor in heaven? Yet, when we see our own evil as God must see it, it is easy to think God should not forgive us either. But God chooses differently. God

offers forgiveness freely to even the worst of sinners – yes, and even to us. No matter how horrible the sin, God removes it from us. Jesus takes it away nailing it to His cross, where He paid the whole price for our redemption. And now He gives us His righteousness, and we share in His resurrection life.

Lord Jesus, I cannot grasp the greatness of Your love and forgiveness. Keep me Your own forever. Amen

**2:9** *chosen race*. As Israel was called God’s chosen people in the OT, so in the NT believers are designated as chosen, or elect. (CSB)

As the Israelites were once the chosen people of God, now Christians are the new Israel, chosen by God. (TLSB)

Isaiah 43:20 refers to election in Christ, “the chosen one” (Is. 42:1, quoted at Jesus’ Baptism). By the second century AD this term was applied to Christians as the “third Race,” in which the Jews (the first race; cf. Romans 1:16) and Gentiles (the second) are one. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

God so loved not only the world, but He loved you in particular that He sought you out and brought you to faith – He wanted you. (PBC)

How far above their adversaries stand believing Christians! Unbelievers are the kingpins in this world, possessing power, honor, authority; on the other hand, Christendom is but an insignificant flock, despised by the unbelieving world, as is its Lord and Master Jesus Christ. Yet in God’s eyes this contrast looks altogether different. Unbelievers, who have run up against Christ, the Cornerstone, have already been confounded. They lie on the ground as though shattered, wedded to eternal damnation and torment. On the other hand, those who believe in Christ, are deemed worthy before God, they are in truth God’s people. Some day they not will share in the glory of God but are even now endowed with divine honor and glory. (Stoekhardt)

The appellations enumerated in v. 9 are taken from the OT. The main passage upon which Peter reflects is Ex. 19:5-6: “if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people...and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation”. (Stoekhardt)

*royal priesthood*. The priests belong to the King, God Himself. Luther: “Each and all are... equally spiritual priests before God...Faith alone is the true priestly office...Therefore all Christian men are priests, all women priestesses, be they young or old, master or servant, mistress or maid, learned or unlearned” (AE 35:101). (TLSB)

“King’s priesthood” is what Lutherans call the priesthood of the entire body of baptized believers, which was God’s original intent for Israel (Ex. 19:6), as opposed to a priestly intermediary caste. In this verse, the honor is less in the specifics of priestly duties and more in the identification as spiritual Israel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

You must exercise the chief function of a priest, that is, to proclaim the wonderful deed God has performed for you to bring you out of darkness into the light. (Luther)

True believers cannot keep still, they simply must speak out with life and with life. (Lenski)

Not one or the other, but both. You are both adopted into the royal family of heaven and anointed into the holy priesthood of God. This means that you have full and free access to communicate with God, to pray directly, needing no other mediator than Jesus Christ, and you are commissioned to a lifelong spiritual ministry of love and service. (PBC)

This generation has a priestly-royal character. We Christians have been elected unto obedience to the truth and unto the sprinkling with the blood of Christ and so also unto a priestly position before God, a position resulting from faith and justification. Our priesthood has been decreed by God from eternity. (Stoeckhardt)

Believing Christians are priests before God, have free access to God, stand before God, deal with God. And they all together form a family of priests, all have equal rights before God. At the same time, they have royal honor and glory. This goes completely beyond the concept of the OT priesthood. Their royal glory results from the priestly. Believing Christians, reconciled as they are to God by Christ, are very close to God; they stand in a very close relationship to Him and, therefore, have power over all ungodly forces. (Stoeckhardt)

*holy nation.* God's people, individually and collectively, are set apart to do His will (Ex. 19:5-6). (TLSB)

Here God designates His gift of his own holiness as well as His call to Spirit-led conduct. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

By faith in Christ you have become a part of the great army of believers, that invisible network that has become what the visible nation of Israelites under their monarchy never were: a nation of holy people. Faith in Jesus Christ makes you holy and it makes you part of the great Christian church on earth and in heaven, the communion of saints. (PBC)

The Christians' third title of honor, "the holy nation", corresponds to the "holy" in "an holy priesthood", V. 5. What Israel should be according to God's determining, Ex 19:6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2-21; 26:19; 28:9 what God demanded already of the people of the OT: "Be ye holy; for I am holy", 1:16, that the NT community is indeed and in truth. (To be sure, it should be noted here that spiritual Israel of the Old Covenant had also demonstrated this intrinsic character). We Christians are sanctified by the Holy Ghost through Word and faith, are freed from the sinful existence of this world and translated into the spiritual, divine existence, just as, according to 1:2, we are chosen unto sanctification of the Spirit. God's Spirit dwells and works in us, sanctifies and renews us from day to day. Sanctification is the ornament of God's house, especially of the priests of God. It is not completely hidden. That priestly nation, which ever and anon stands and walks before, deals with, God, reflects the nature, the holiness of God. That nation shines as a bright light in the midst of this murderous generation. Of course, one sees in Christendom still many spots and wrinkles, but they do not completely obscure its divine, godly nature. From this one discovers that in this generation and in all its members, even in the weakest, there dwells a force different from that dwelling in the world and in the children of the world. (Stoeckhardt)

*people for his own possession.* See Dt 4:20; 7:6; 14:2; Isa 43:21; Mal 3:17. Though once not the people of God, they are now the recipients of God's mercy (see Hos 1:6-10; Ro 9:25-26; 10:19). (CSB)

Repeats the truth that God's people belong to Him. (TLSB)

Means a people belonging to God; a treasure owned by God. “You will be my possession” (Deut. 7:6); “my treasured possession” (Mal. 3:17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

This represents God’s a Greek translation of the Hebrew word in God’s promise that out of all the nations, Israel will be his own treasured possession. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

There is an enormous satisfaction in realizing that you are connected to God, that you have a place, a spirit home, connections of mutual obligations. We are God’s possession not as slaves, as things that are owned, but as children for whom He accepts a huge and unending obligation. (PBC)

God has elected the Church to be His own from the very beginning. When the apostle at the end of his description of the glory of the Church once more mentions God’s right ownership, he wants to point out that what God has chosen will remain His in time and for eternity. God does not abandon His people. The opponents of Christendom, the enemies of faith and salvation, will never succeed in tearing away from God thus His precious possession. Thus already in the very beginning of his letter Peter had given the elect strangers and assurance that they will be preserved unto salvation by God’s power through faith. (Stoekhardt)

*proclaim the excellencies.* Actor William Booth once played before the king of England and gave a great performance. The next three nights he played before smaller and less distinguished audiences, yet his performances were still masterpieces. When asked, “How can you keep that up night after night?” he answered, “I always play for the King! Both meant the heavenly King. We also are “play” always for our King. That is the thought of St. Paul, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). (LifeLight)

This indicates a response in worship, mission proclamation, and holy living. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

In the narrow sense the expression mostly likely means acts of worship (Is. 42:10-12; 43:21); in a wider sense, spreading the Word of God (Mk. 16:15); also the witness of holy living. This would fit well with v. 12, “Living such good lives among the pagans that...they may see your good deeds and glorify God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Taking it even another step, Paul begins his exhortation to holy living with “I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – which is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). “Living sacrifices” in contrast to dead creatures offered to God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

A greater contrast cannot be conceived of than that which the apostle here presents with regard to the unbelievers and the believers. The unbelievers, by their own fault, have become subject to the condemnation of the Lord, and their lot is inexpressibly sad, since, if they persist in their unbelief, they are forever cast off by God. But to the believers the apostle applies all the honoring designations which were given to the people of God in the Old Testament: But you are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the people of His possession, that you may tell out the virtues of Him who has called you out of darkness into His wonderful light, Ex. 19:6. These excellencies do not appear, of course, before the eyes of men. According to the opinion of the world, on the contrary, the believers are a negligible quantity of misguided fools, to whom no sane person will pay serious attention. But hear the opinion of the Lord. He calls them the chosen generation; they have been chosen, or elected, for the position they hold by the resolution of God

before the foundation of the world; not only the individual sojourners, but the entire congregation of saints was included in the plan of God; a royal priesthood, for Christ has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, Rev. 1:6; the holy, the consecrated nation, separated from the world and reflecting the holiness of the Lord; the people of His possession, of His purchasing, that belong to Him, with regard to whose members all the plans of their enemies will prove futile. Because we occupy this wonderful position in the sight of God, therefore it behooves us, therefore it is natural for us to publish, to proclaim freely and widely, the virtues, the excellencies, of our God, to tell men of, to praise, the goodness, kindness, mercy, grace of God. We can do this with all the greater impressiveness, because we have experienced these attributes in ourselves, because He has called us out of the darkness of our natural condition into the wonderful light of His love in the Gospel, assuring us, at the same time, of the complete forgiveness of all our sins. (Kretzmann)

This statement states the purpose God has in mind when He grants Christendom honor and glory. The chief function of the OT priests was to offer God sacrifice for the people. Christians exercise their claim to priesthood before God when they bring Him spiritual offerings. That was stated in verse 5. Another function of the Levitical priests was to instruct the nation in the law. (Deut. 17:11) Christians fulfill their priestly mission when they instruct the ignorant. To this the apostle now draws attention. (Stoekhardt)

The relationship of Christian to the world, which theme runs through the entire following section comes to the fore here already. We Christians should share with others what we ourselves have recognized and believed. We should not keep these things to ourselves but shout them out loudly to the world. As His priests we should say to the world that the God before whom we stand, whom we serve, is a holy and righteous God, who is not pleased by godless existence, who will judge each one according to his works. As a priest of God, however, we should above all extol to all the world the goodness, kindness, mercy, and grace of God, particularly that virtue or divine attribute implied in the designation of God as “him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light”. This calling is again that efficacious, successful calling identical with conversion. (Stoekhardt)

According to the context darkness is the former wretched condition under sin and light of God is God’s salvation, His grace in Christ. This NT salvation is wonderful because it goes far beyond our thinking and comprehension. (Stoekhardt)

Colossian 1:13, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.”

*called you out of darkness* - Sin and alienation from God. (TLSB)

*marvelous light* - Only in Jesus, the light of the world, can we truly see things as they are. Cf. John 1:4-13; 3:19-21. Luther: “We must recognize in our hearts and believe that we receive everything from Him and that He is our God. Then out with it, and freely and openly confess this before the world - preach, glorify, and give thanks! This is the real and only worship of God, the true office of the priest, and the finest, most acceptable offering” (AE 14:32). (TLSB)

**2:10** The allusions to Hosea (1:9; 2:1; 2:23) are obvious throughout this verse. God’s “mercy and faithfulness,” is a central concept in Hosea. God calls Christians (both Jewish and Gentile) “my people” and “receivers of mercy” after the previous warrant and subsequent disenfranchisement

of Israel. The precious nature of God's commitment to His people in Christ radiates throughout this section. (Concordia Pulpit Resources Volume 6, Part 2)

Of this the apostle has still more to say: Who formerly were not a people, but now the people of God, who had not become partakers of mercy, but now have received mercy. Cp. Hos. 2, 23. The readers whom Peter addresses had formerly, before their conversion, been a non-people, they had not been in the kingdom of the Lord. But now they have been transferred out of the darkness of heathenism and enmity toward God to the glory of the Kingdom of Grace. In their former state they were not under mercy, but under God's wrath and condemnation. But now they have become partakers of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ. It is the same miracle which the Christians of all times have experienced. And this fact they are to make known to others, telling them of their deliverance from destruction, of their redemption from death, of their salvation through the blood of Christ. That is the best occupation in which Christians may engage. (Kreztmann)

*you are God's people* – God calls Christians (both Jewish and Gentile) “my people” and “receivers of mercy.” - Peter wants his hurting brothers and sisters to know that their suffering changes nothing. Remember who you are! Remember what you were. In verse, Peter quotes Isaiah's contemporary, the prophet Hosea, whose whole message could be summed up by those few words: “Not my people..but now you are my people.” (PBC)

Apart from God, humans are isolated and not in relationship with Him or others. Having received God's blessings, He places us in His Body, the Church. Now we belong; we are part of God's people. (TLSB)

John 1:12, “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Ephesians 2:12, “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world

**2:11 beloved** – This seldom-used address by Peter makes this new exhortation very urgent. (Stoekhardt)

Peter is also part of God's people; he addresses other Christians as family members. (TLSB)

*sojourners and exiles*. As aliens and strangers on earth, whose citizenship is in heaven, they are to be separated from the corruption of the world, not yielding to its destructive sinful desires. (CSB)

Citizens of heaven who are not yet living in their true home (cf 1:1). (TLSB)

In reaching our goal of being witnesses for Christ, we always remember who we are, aliens and strangers in the world, people who live in this world, who daily rub shoulders with the people of this world, but who are not of it themselves. We are servants of the cross. While we live in the world as good citizens of our communities and nations, sharing many interests and concerns with our non-Christian neighbors, we look beyond this world for our direction, our values, our approval, our encouragement, and our hope for the future. (LifeLight)

People who learn to see themselves as just passing through their earthly lives are in training themselves to think long-term. Satan owns short-term gratification. Everything that slimy son of

hell has to offer is for now. Rage, hatred, sexual lust, drug and alcohol hunger, and all want to be gratified now, and who cares about the future? But long-term thinking ponders the consequences of present actions. As Christians grow in maturity, they learn to say no to the lure of immediate gratification if it will hurt them or other people or their relationship to the Lord down the line. (PBC)

Christians are pilgrims in the world; inwardly they are already removed from the world. From this it follows that they do not let themselves become trapped in the evil reality of the world. This world's children are controlled by evil lusts, always doing what the flesh desires. Thus should it not be among Christians. True Christians are still in the flesh with its lusts and inordinate desires. (Stoekhardt)

Having pointed out the inestimable blessings and privileges which the Christians enjoy, the apostle now makes a specific application of these truths in showing what obligations their possession implies: Beloved, as sojourners and strangers I admonish you to abstain from the lusts of the flesh, which battle against the soul. The intimate form of address, which is but rarely used by Peter, is intended to convey to the readers the force of the admonition. Because the Christians are but sojourners, strangers, pilgrims in this world, and are looking forward to their real home above, therefore they will certainly not endanger their hope of salvation by yielding to their fleshly lusts. The children of this world, the unbelievers, are governed and ruled by their evil desires; they perform the will of the flesh, and that gladly. But the Christians, instead of permitting their flesh, their old sinful nature, to rule them and to lead them into various sins, will wage an incessant war against these lusts of their flesh. For they know that these evil, godless desires battle against the soul, about whose salvation they are so earnestly concerned. If the lusts of the flesh gain the ascendancy in the heart of a Christian, then his soul, his true life in and with God, is lost. Under no circumstances, therefore, dare Christians heed the tempting voice of the charmers whose aim is to represent the sins of the flesh as a harmless gratification of natural inclinations. The attitude of the Christians must be that of an altogether uncompromising stand against every form of sin. (Kretzmann)

Luther says, "This now commands an upright Christian life, a life never in repose, and yet not adjusted to the point that one is insensitive to sin. You should feel it but don't tolerate it. At this point, fast, pray, work in order to suppress and quell lust. Therefore, don't dare think of becoming a saint as those fools speak of saintliness. As long as there's flesh and blood, just so long will sin be there; therefore, it must ever be combatted. The one who dares not learn this cannot boast of being a Christian." (Stoekhardt)

*abstain from the passions of the flesh* – While we live in this world we are engaged in a quiet but determined struggle. This is not a political struggle. It is not a struggle for worldly power or wealth. It is a struggle for the hearts and convictions of our neighbors. We struggle against the spiritual forces and powers of darkness that are holding our neighbors captive. Our weapons and strategy in this struggle are spiritual, not worldly. (LifeLight)

*wage war* – Our sinful flesh is constantly tempting us to sin. (TLSB)

**2:12 Gentles** – Lit, "nations." Unbelievers pay attention to the actions of Christians. (TLSB)

*see your good deeds*. Deeds that can be seen to be good (cf. Mt 5:16). The Greek word translated "see" refers to a careful watching, over a period of time. The pagans' evaluation is not a "snap judgment." (CSB)

Good works, especially unexpected things, often make a strong impact on unbelievers (Mt 5:16). Deeds that demonstrate belief are a powerful witness. (TLSB)

The distinction between believers and unbelievers must always be marked: Having your conduct in the midst of the heathen as an excellent one, so that, in the matter in which they now speak against you as evil-doers, they may, being spectators of your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation. The conduct of the Christians will, as a matter of course, always be in conformity with the will of God, with the denial and suppression of the lusts of the flesh, and therefore good, excellent in the sight of God. The corresponding impression upon men will then also not fail. For the very men that were now looking upon the Christians as bad or suspicious characters, as enemies of the government and as addicted to immoral practices, were still open to conviction. The Christians, therefore, should so conduct themselves in all their dealings before men, should so live in the very midst of the heathen, that their life would be a testimony for them, in favor of the Gospel. The good works of the Christians, their meekness under the severest provocations, their cheerful readiness to be of service at all times, their self-evident observance of all precepts of God's holy will - all these were bound to make an impression, in spite of all opposition. Many an unbeliever that originally considered Christianity a huge fraud has been led to reconsider his first impression by the conduct of the confessing believers. Exact observation, closer acquaintance, showed him the injustice of his position. And when the grace of God was then proclaimed to him, when God visited him with the gracious Word of the Gospel, his heart was changed in favor of the Christian religion, he accepted its truths, he glorified God, whom he now recognized also as his Father for the sake of Jesus. (Kretzmann)

Living good lives also helps Christians look good to their unbelieving neighbors. Even while they are seeking to pressure you into conformity with them, they are watching how you act. They may not understand your beliefs, but there is no mistaking an outward life of honesty, hard work, respect for others, and love for one's family. Your loving and moral life may not convert your neighbors who worship Mithras, the sun god, but they will (reluctantly) have to give the true God the glory when He returns. (PBC)

*the day of visitation.* Perhaps the Day of Judgment and ensuing punishment, or possibly the day when God visits a person with salvation. The believer's good life may then influence the unbeliever to repent and believe. (CSB)

Time when God reveals Himself. Previous good experiences with Christians may make unbelievers more likely to consider what Christians teach. (TLSB)

**2:1–12** Like all people, we were born in sin and lived in the darkness of the world. But Christ, the light of the world, has called us out of darkness into His light. He makes us His own, gives us a place as citizens of His kingdom, and empowers us to live as His royal priesthood. We are not alone but are part of His people, a holy nation. Now that same Savior calls us to tell others of His love. Through our words and actions, we proclaim the life and salvation that is ours in Jesus. • Lord Jesus, as the cornerstone, You make us living stones in Your house and servants of Your Gospel. Bless us with a heart for the lost, that they may come to saving faith in You. Amen. (TLSB)

*Submission to Authority*

**13 Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to**

**praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. 18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

**2:13–3:6** Peter urges that Christians submit to all legitimate authorities, whether or not the persons exercising authority are believers. The recognition of properly constituted authority is necessary for the greatest good of the largest number of people, and it is necessary to best fulfill the will of God in the world. (CSB)

**2:13** *be subject* – Submission is one of the greatest Christian virtues. It is hard to do. The sinful attitudes in us – pride, selfishness, arrogance, stubbornness – don't like to bend. It is especially hard for Christians under persecution to have to submit to rulers they know are unjust. But this pleases God, who established and still stands behind all human authority. God made human being to need structure in their lives. No kind of society is possible without leadership and some form of authority. (African nations that suddenly overthrow their dictators but have nothing in place to be in charge fall into total chaos.) (PBC)

*every human institution.* Authority established among men depends on God for its existence (Ro 13:1–2). Indirectly, when one disobeys a human ruler he disobeys God, who ordained the system of human government (cf. Ro 13:2). (CSB)

God established the Church to bless His people. But He has also established secular government for good order and a harmonious life. Christians are subjects of both kingdoms. (TLSB)

Here the apostle mentions some specific instances in which his instructions concerning the behavior of the Christians over against the heathen should find their application: Submit yourselves to every human authority for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the emperor, as supreme, or to the governors as deputed by him for the punishing of evil-doers, but for the praise of those that do well. This admonition, the necessity of which must be admitted in our days without question, was badly needed also in the days of the early Church. Not only was the doctrine of spiritual liberty liable to be misinterpreted by superficial Christians, but some of them might be under the impression that the government, being heathen, was none of their concern, and that they owed no allegiance to the emperor. Therefore the apostle plainly states that believers are to submit themselves, are to be subject and obedient to every human authority and institution. Whether men have chosen the democratic or the monarchical form of government makes no difference to the Lord, for by His authority all governments exist, Rom. 13:1- 2. It makes no difference either, as the apostle indicates, whether all authority is vested in a single man, as in an emperor, or whether this emperor, as the supreme, the preeminent head of the nation, commissions or deposes governors to administer justice in any section of the empire, the authority

of the government should be recognized and its existence by divine order acknowledged. (Kretzmann)

The men of the Sanhedrin who demanded the crucifixion of Christ slandered Him before Pontius Pilate as a destroyer of governmental authority and a threat to the public peace. And yet was it not Christ who had told His followers to “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s” (Matthew 22:21)? In Caesarea the high priest Ananias and the Sanhedrin’s lawyer, Tertullus, urged Governor Felix to condemn his prisoner the apostle Paul because “we have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots... all over the world” (Acts 24:5). And yet was it not Paul who wrote the strong words of Romans 13:1-7, which command all Christians to show respect and obedience to their (even pagan) governments? The humble and respectful behavior of Christ and Paul, of the martyr Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (A.D. 69-156), and of thousands of others under persecution silenced this ignorant talk and won respect for the Christian faith. (PBC)

*to the emperor.* When Peter wrote, the emperor was the godless, brutal Nero, who ruled from A.D. 54 to 68 (see Introduction: Author and Date). Of course, obedience to the emperor must never be in violation of the law of God (to see this basic principle in action cf. Ac 4:19). (CSB)

“King” here is the Roman Emperor. This was at the time of Nero, a Gentile, a monster, a tyrant, a persecutor of Christians. However, it is not the person that matters but the office which the person holds. So the apostle adds: as him who is in authority, as supreme, as rulers. And this authority exists in every nation. It is not determined by the nature of the political constitution, being found in a republic as well as in a monarchy. Every existing government which has de facto authority is ordained by God. (Rom. 13:1) (Stoekhardt)

**2:14** *punish...praise* – Evildoers invite the full justice of the civil law; the obedient are given wide latitude to use their freedom. (TLSB)

That is one of the functions of the government, that it punish such as are wicked, as refuse to keep the peace, as are disobedient to the laws of the country. The people that do well, on the other hand, those that live in conformity with the laws of the land, the government should acknowledge with proper praise, that is, by protecting them and their property against every form of wickedness. Note: It is self-evident that Christians cannot be obedient to the government if the latter tries to extend its authority to spiritual matters, Acts 4:19. (Kretzmann)

In spite of the sinful corruption in any man-made governmental authority, God prefers that to anarchy. Even a government as riddled with injustice and corruption as the Roman Empire still made everyday life possible for its citizens, because to some degree wrongdoers were held accountable and productive citizens were commended. (PBC)

When government leadership demands something which God has forbidden, or forbids something which God has commanded, when it chooses to exercise authority within the church, then is applicable for Christians what Peter maintained in opposition to Jewish officials when they forbade the apostles to preach the Gospel: one ought to obey God rather than men. (Acts 4:19). (Stoekhardt)

**2:15** *silence the ignorance.* Good citizenship counters false charges made against Christians and thus commends the gospel to unbelievers. (CSB)

When Christians live out their faith, they prove that the world’s slanderous accusations are false. (TLSB)

The motive for the willing obedience of the Christians is given by the apostle: For so is the will of God, namely, that in well-doing you silence the error of foolish men, as free, and not having your freedom as a cloak of your malice, but as God's servants. The statement just made by the apostle is not his own personal opinion, which the Christians may or may not accept, as they choose, but it is the will of God. The Christians in this way, by cheerful obedience to the constituted authorities, will do more to silence the wrong ideas, the errors which foolish men hold with regard to their status in the state, than by books written in explanation of their tenets. Mark: Also in our days, when the unbelievers are jeering at the otherworldliness of the true Christian religion and boldly declare that Christianity has proved a failure in coping with the special problems of our days, our most effective argument is to do our duty in good works, as citizens and as neighbors, meanwhile changing neither our religion nor the means of grace given to us by God. (Kretzmann)

**2:16** *Live as people who are free.* Does not authorize rebellion against constituted authority, but urges believers freely to submit to God and to earthly authorities (as long as such submission does not conflict with the law of God). (CSB)

Christians are free from forced obedience to the Law; nonetheless, they voluntarily use their freedom in service to others. (TLSB)

Because we are tangled up in so many relationships, some sacred and some secular, there will always be some tension here. Martin Luther wrote about this tension in his famous 1520 tract *The Freedom of a Christian*: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord, subject to no one; a Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant to all, subject to all." Is it possible that both statements are true? Certainly. We are free in Christ. We are royal priests, sons and daughters of the Most High King. But we are also servants (even slaves). We have powerful obligations to God, to our families, to our fellow Christians, to our communities and country, and even to unbelievers. Yes, to unbelievers too. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 9:19, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible." (PBC)

Christians should remember that they are free, that they are partakers of the wonderful freedom which the Son of God earned for them by His suffering and death. As free children of God we Christians will therefore show that willing submission to which the apostle admonishes. But no true believer will plead freedom from the Law as his excuse for not obeying the government, for not fulfilling the holy will of God in every possible way. He will not, under the pretense of standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, become guilty of sins and of various forms of wickedness. That would be a disgraceful abuse of the freedom to which Christ has called us, Gal. 5:13. We are in the service of God; this is our highest boast, that we are not serving as unwilling slaves, but as servants, whose greatest delight it is to show the new spiritual life in works which will please our heavenly Father. (Kretzmann)

You Christians are free, free lords in the kingdom of heaven and as a result highly exalted above all earthly matters of concern, including political affairs. So show this your freedom by submitting willingly to civil jurisdiction. True Christian liberty is, at the same time, divine servitude. (Stoekhardt)

*as a cover-up for evil.* Genuine freedom is the freedom to serve God, a freedom exercised under law. (CSB)

Freedom from the Law's demands does not excuse sinful behavior. We strive to follow God's will but never rely on our efforts for salvation. (TLSB)

*living as servants of God* – Our actions are not motivated by the Law but by love of God. (TLSB)

**2:17** *honor everyone.* † We are to respect all human beings, since all are creatures of God for whom Christ died. (CSB)

Everyone rightfully in authority, whether in the Church or the state, is to receive their due honor. (TLSB)

Give each and every one of your fellow men the honor due him because of civil status, due him as a man, as a creature of God. (Stoekhardt)

As such free men, that serve God in willing obedience, the Christians are glad to hear the apostle in his call: Give honor to all; love the brotherhood; fear God; honor the king. To all their fellow-men the Christians are to give the honor which is due them in whatever position they hold in the state or in society. To all their brethren in the faith they should show that intimate, intensive love which is proper among children of the same heavenly Father. (Kretzmann)

It should be noted that slavery as practiced in the first century was far removed from the ugly racial slavery of the Americas. Roman slavery was not race-based – people wound up in slavery as captives of war by hard economic choice. In fact Roman slaves were often better educated than their masters, could acquire property, but their freedom, marry whom they wished, and had certain legal protections. In some ways being a slave was economically preferable to being a free laborer, for Roman slaves were guaranteed clothes, food, and lodging. (PBC)

*love the brotherhood* – This love is the profound, intimate love that exists only among like-minded people, among Christians towards fellow Christians. (Stoekhardt)

The Church. (TLSB)

*fear God.* God must be honored and obeyed above all. (TLSB)

To God they should give fear and reverence, all other considerations being relegated to the background in view of this demand. To the king or emperor, that is, to the constituted government, they will give the honor which is due according to the Fourth Commandment. Altogether, it is not a mere passive attitude which the Lord here speaks of, but an active exhibition of a state of mind which is bound in loving obedience under the Word of God. (Kretzmann)

*honor the emperor* – You honor the supreme sovereign when you recognize his authority and thus yield to his authority. (Stoekhardt)

Even corrupt human authorities should be honored and obeyed as long as they do not command that Christians violate God's will. (TLSB)

**2:18-20** This paragraph has caused some consternation among certain readers and critics of Christianity, for does it not seem that Peter is endorsing the practice of human slavery? Actually (and Paul in his letter to the slave owner Philemon, for instance) neither endorses the practice not

calls for its violent overthrow. They simply worked with it as an inescapable feature of life everywhere in the Roman Empire. Involuntary servitude has existed throughout human history, from the earliest recorded human history to 19<sup>th</sup>-century America's dreadful Civil War. In part, there are reports of human ownership in various parts of the world into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Paul certainly did not approve of the slave trade, for in 1 Timothy 1:10, he lists slave traders along with murderers and adulterers as "lawbreakers and rebels." In 1 Corinthians 7:21 he encouraged Christian slaves to gain their freedom if they could, but not to worry if they couldn't – those who are called by the Lord are the Lord's freemen. (PBC)

It should be noted that slavery as practiced in the first century was far removed from the ugly racial slavery of the Americas. Roman slavery was not race-based – people wound up in slavery as captives of war or by hard economic choice. In fact, Roman slaves were often better educated than their masters, could acquire property, but their freedom, marry whom they wished, and had certain legal protections. In some ways being a slave was economically preferable to being a free laborer, for Roman slaves were guaranteed clothes, food, and lodging. The great orator Cicero wrote that the average length of this involuntary servitude was only about seven years. (PBC)

Christianity spread rapidly among the huge slave population of the empire. Peter counseled them to see themselves as free in the Lord, but to respect the obligations that their position in society laid upon them. He did not want the Christian faith to be seen merely as a revolutionary political or economic movement – what mattered was people's relationship with their Savior Jesus Christ, and in drawing other people into such a relationship. That would happen best by showing that Christians were really the best citizens (and the best slaves). That is why he gives such high praise to people who bore up under unjust suffering rather than retaliate. (PBC)

**2:18 Slaves.** Household servants, whatever their particular training and functions. The context indicates that Peter is addressing Christian slaves. NT writers do not attack slavery as an institution, but the NT contains the principles that ultimately uprooted slavery. Peter's basic teachings on the subject may apply to employer-employee relations today (see Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–25; 1Ti 6:1–2; Tit 2:9–10). (CSB)

Specifically addresses household servants. (TLSB)

oiketai meaning household servants, usually slaves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Having shown the proper relation of the citizens to their government, the apostle here delineates the attitude which God, according to the Fourth Commandment, expects from slaves, the majority of the members in the Asiatic congregations apparently belonging to this class. (Kretzmann)

*with all respect* – This means reverent fear, not being afraid of punishment but giving honor to whom honor is due. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Servants, be in subjection in all fear to your masters, not only to the good and lenient, but also to the perverse. The word used by the apostle, "domestics, family servants," is not so harsh as the plain "slaves," and it intimates that in many cases the masters granted to their slaves privileges which made them almost members of the family. Such Christian servants were not to be influenced by a false idea of Christian liberty and refuse to do their work, but they were, in free obedience, to be in subjection, in submission to their masters, and with all fear at that, Eph. 6:5. (Kretzmann)

American Christians don't have a king to honor, but we do have a president, senators, representatives, judges, and a wide array of state and local officials. Although it is fashionable today for comedians and talk show hosts to ridicule elected officials as incompetent, selfish, drunkards, although politics in any country is rarely free from financial or sexual scandal, we can exercise our faith by showing support for those who are trying to lead. By involving ourselves with community projects and service, by informing ourselves on political issues and then voting, we show support for our government and honor the God who gave us our democracy. (PBC)

*also to the unjust* – (skoliois – crooked, unreasonable, or overbearing). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Even those who mistreat others are our neighbors. Christians are to serve even unjust authorities, who may see their example and come to faith (cf 3:1). (TLSB)

They should feel a fear or dread of doing anything which might be contrary to the will of their masters, rather show all care and diligence in performing the work of their calling. And this was to be the case not only when the masters were good, kind, gentle, lenient, but also when they were of a perverse, morose disposition, when they were hard to please, when they were tyrannical. (Kretzmann)

Not only to the good, well-meaning and gentle, kind but also to the corrupt masters, who demonstrate their depraved attitude in harsh, unjust treatment, Christian slaves should willingly surrender themselves. Misuse of power does not subvert seigniorial right. It is particularly difficult to understand this. (Stoekhardt)

**2:19** Righteous living in the face of injustice demonstrates reliance on God's grace. Christians who suffer for the sake of the Gospel find favor with God, and they witness to His power. (TLSB)

*is a gracious thing* – This literally means, "For this grace," and can possibly have the same sense as in Luke 6:32-34, where it means the "approval of God." Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

For this is grace, if on account of conscience toward God one patiently bears afflictions, suffering unjustly. There is no special distinction or praise in doing one's work cheerfully and conscientiously if the master or employer is uniformly kind and lenient. But that is grace, that is pleasing and acceptable to God, that is a mark of His favor in granting the ability, that is a fine, excellent work in which God delights, if a person in that station, that of a slave, a servant, bears the afflictions of injustice, abuse, with patient endurance, if he takes upon himself even the unjust treatment administered by the temper of the master. (Kretzmann)

**UNJUST SUFFERING** – The Christian will put aside all provocation and not permit anger to get the better of him under such adverse circumstances, simply because he is conscious of the fact that it is the Lord who sends or permits such tribulations to come upon him, and because his conscience tells him that he owes it to God, his heavenly Father, to show patient endurance under such circumstances. (Kretzmann)

*mindful of God.* As submission to duly constituted authority is "for the Lord's sake" (v. 13; cf. Eph 6:7-8), so one will submit to the point of suffering unjustly if it is God's will. (CSB)

If his conscience can only have God's approval, unmixed delight remains. A thing well-pleasing to God, a thing which brings God's approval and good will. Not the suffering in itself but

patiently bearing the undeserved suffering because he did not want to violate his Christian conscience an upright Christian slave bore all perversity, all unjust treatment. – Christianity spread rapidly among the huge slave population of the empire. Peter counseled them to see themselves as free in the Lord, but to respect the obligations that their position in society laid upon them. He did not want the Christian faith to be seen merely as a revolutionary political or economic movement – what mattered was people’s relationship with their Savior Jesus Christ, and in drawing other people into such a relationship. (PBC)

Christian slaves and Gentile masters the apostle has in mind here. The religion of the slaves, Christianity was despised by the Gentile master. He, as did Gentiles generally, regarded belief in Christianity a misdeed (v. 12). And for the sake of conscience to God, ever mindful of God, ever mindful of what he owes God as a Christian, because he did not want to violate his Christian conscience an upright Christian slave willingly bore all perversity, all unjust treatment, to which his Christianity introduced him. (Stoekhardt)

**2:20** *are beaten* – kolaphidzomenoi means to be buffeted about. The term is used in Mark 14:65, where the evangelist tells of the treatment given to Christ in the trial before the Sanhedrin. Slaves are to accept the unjust abuse from their masters not only because it is a part of their saintly lives but because it is God pleasing. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

The KJV has “buffeted.” It means to strike with the fist, to box the ears, and then generally to cuff someone. (Stoekhardt)

*when you sin and are beaten for it* – amartanontes “sinning”– Their newly found faith does not give them license to act as rebels in their relationship with their masters. Verse 16 says “live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

The future tense “ye shall take it” is from the standpoint of the exhortation. Meaning: It is nothing to be proud of when you let fall the blows which you have brought upon yourselves by your own failures. (Stoekhardt)

That a Christian servant will in just this way give evidence of his Christianity the apostle shows in a question which he now proposes: For what praise is it if you sin and then endure a beating patiently? But if you do right and then endure suffering, this is grace before God. There is no special credit in enduring beating, stripes, punishment, with a great show of patience if such punishment was soundly deserved on account of some willful defection, some wrong-doing. (Kretzmann)

*when you do good* – This could refer to their lifestyle both as their masters view it and others as well. In 4:4 it says “They (pagan) think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – volume 9, Part 2)

Bearing a cross for the sake of the Gospel may be difficult, but it is a holy, precious, noble, and blessed calling. Christians face such sufferings with God’s strength. (TLSB)

Christians today can live their Christianity by the respectful and cooperative way in which they do their jobs, especially when they have to work for a boss who is oppressive and unfair. Anybody can like a boss who is kind, complimentary, and fair all the time. It takes a Christian to work cheerfully for a mean one. (PBC)

It is different, however, if a servant does right, does his work faithfully in every respect, and then is obliged to suffer, receives beatings, even though he does what he knows to be right and good before God. To endure patiently in a case of this kind, that is pleasing and acceptable to God, that can be done only by a gracious dispensation of strength on His part, that is a fine, excellent work. Mark: Although these words are addressed primarily to Christian slaves, their admonitions may well be heeded by all employees and servants everywhere; for a Christian will be faithful in his work and ready to endure even injustice, knowing that the good pleasure of the Lord rests upon him. (Kretzmann)

The cause of his suffering and punishment is his Christianity. The exhortation, which is chiefly directed to Christian domestic slaves, can be applied to present day situations, to servants and maids, to people of our day who by their own choice become domestics. Applicable are these words: "Servants, maids, laborers, workmen, etc., are as much Christian as are those who have positions of high honor in the world. The prophet in Psalm 123:2 gives a good comparison, showing how they should perform: "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the head of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,; that is servants and maids should with fear and humility do what the master or mistress desires. This God wants; therefore, they should gladly do it. Consequently, they can be sure and certain that their work is pleasing and acceptable to God when they do it in faith and in obedience to God. The best works are those which one does in the line of duty according to God's command. A servant or maid need not think: as I have such an insignificant, wretched job and must always attend to my duties, I really cannot serve God – this was a common compliant in the Papacy. (Stoeckhardt)

We are not slaves, but we may have employers to whom we must answer for our work. (We may even call them "slave drivers" – just joking, of course!) But the same principles Peter refers to here apply to us as we work for other people. We are to take ill-treatment patiently and, in doing so commend ourselves to God. Certainly we set an example of honesty, dependability, cheerfulness, and industriousness – and in this way commend our faith in Jesus and our love for the Lord to unbelievers. (LifeLight)

**2:21** *To this you have been called.* The patient endurance of injustice is part of God's plan for the Christian. It was an important feature of the true grace of God experienced by the readers (5:12). (CSB)

God calls Christians to live out their faith in the midst of suffering. (TLSB)

The key idea is submission. Submission in biblical usage does not mean that you thereby become inferior or that what you submit to is thereby superior to you. To be a subject or a slave or a wife does not diminish your value before God. As Paul said in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ." Being willing to submit, according to your station in life, means that you love the Lord and love people enough to give up some of your freedom, willingly yielding to government, masters, husbands, or elders in the church. Our inspiration for willing submission comes from Jesus Christ, who became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. (PBC)

Already at their calling, at their conversion to Christ Christians were given to see not only eternal glory, but also the way of suffering as the way to glory. Thus it belongs to the calling of Christians to go this way, to suffer unjustly and patiently. (Stoeckhardt)

The key idea is submission. Submission in biblical usage does not mean that you thereby become inferior or that what you submit to is thereby superior to you. To be a subject or a slave or a wife does not diminish your value before God. (PBC)

The first reason for suffering wrong readily is the good pleasure of God, the second is that of the Christian's calling, as it is typified in the example of Christ: For to this end you were called, because also Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His footsteps. That is a part of the believer's calling, that is the fate which was held out before him at the very time of his conversion, namely, that he will indeed be an heir of eternal glory, but that the way leading to this glorious bliss is also one of much tribulation, Acts 14:22. (Kretzmann)

*Christ also suffered for you.* Cf. Isa 52:13–53:12. Christ is the supreme example of suffering evil for doing good. His experience as the suffering Servant-Savior transforms the sufferings of his followers from misery into privilege. (CSB)

Our sufferings pale in comparison to what Christ suffered for us. (TLSB)

Christ's willing self-submission is important not only as an example. It was the way in which he redeemed the human race. Peter refers three times to Isaiah chapter 53, the great story of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, whose humble self-sacrifice brought life and healing to all who believe in Him. He bore our sins in His body on the tree – and this not only to give us forgiveness but so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. This is the mystery of the process of sanctification – as we grow in faith and understanding, our lives become more Christ-like. Our own troubles and sufferings are transformed from misery into ministry. (PBC)

Christ has suffered for us, for our sakes, for our good, for our salvation. This contains the thought that He did not suffer on account of His sins, therefore, suffered unjustly. He has suffered for us, out of love for us. Thus it was a voluntary suffering. Yes, with such suffering, with innocent, patient, voluntary suffering Christ has made the beginning and thereby given us an example. (Stoekhardt)

*leaving you an example* – They and we are called to patient suffering, also without guilt because Christ suffered innocently and it was to this purpose that they/we should imitate him. – We are called upon to “actually follow” (aorist tense) the steps, literally the footprints, left in the soil by Jesus. To slave labors, this metaphor carried great power for understanding the suffering of Christ and for following Him through their own indignities. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

We first receive Christ as our Savior and deliverer. Only then is He an example for us to follow. (TLSB)

We are to bear the cross, if God wills, just as His Son did for us (Mt 10:38–39). (TLSB)

The Suffering Servant is now held up as the great example, whom they should follow in His steps. Were this to stand alone, Peter would be moralizing: “Try to be like Jesus.” “Jesus swam across the river of suffering that threatened to engulf Him; He show you how – now do it.” Reaching back to Isaiah 53 Peter presents the underlying motive for such endurance: three of the six references focus on Christ as our Substitute (Is. 53:4, 5, 8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

He leaves a drawing – written pattern – for us to follow in the tracks – retrace the steps. (Lenski)

Incidentally, the disciple is not above his Master, and Christ Himself serves as a type, example, or pattern to the believers that we should follow His footsteps, be as much like Him as possible, grow more like Him every day. This example He set before us in His suffering during His whole life, and particularly at the time of His last great Passion. The meekness and humility, the patience and endurance which Christ showed at this time should always stand out strongly before the eyes of the Christians. (Kretzmann)

Matthew 16:24, “Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

**2:22** *committed no sin* – Jesus never sinned, not even in the face of completely undeserved suffering. (TLSB)

Scripture declares the sinlessness of Christ in the clearest of terms, allowing for no exception (see 1:19; Ac 3:14; 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Jn 3:5). (CSB)

*neither was deceit found in his mouth.* Cf. v. 1; 3:10. (CSB)

The individual instances in which His example stands out with such marked emphasis are now named: Who did not commit sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth, who, being reviled, reviled not in return, suffering did not threaten, but left it to Him that judges righteously. Cf.. Is. 53:9. The suffering of the Messiah was in no way merited by His own transgressions of the divine Law; even upon His direct challenge the Jews were unable to convict Him of a single sin, John 8, 46. In both His actions and His words Christ was un-blamable. Even those sayings of Christ which were deliberately branded as lies by His enemies were without guile, altogether true. Not one of the accusations which the members of the Sanhedrin brought against the Lord was substantiated. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:9b, “though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

**2:23** Prominent examples of our Lord’s silent submission are found in Mt 27:12–14, 34–44 and parallels. (CSB)

Though mocked by His lying accusers, Jesus never responded in kind. (TLSB)

This example of the Lord’s patience should gaze at steadily and emulate. That presumes that Christi slaves, upon the whole Christians, had been reviled, reproached, and badly treated by the Gentiles, just as was Christ, their Lord and Master. Therefore, for Christ’s sake since they had accepted Him, God’s Son, in whom alone is salvation, as then true Christians of all eras must to a greater or lesser degree bear the disgrace heaped upon Christ. (Stoekhardt)

When Christ was scorned, cursed, covered with the vilest epithets, He did not return in kind in a single instance. What He had taught His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount He kept in every way. Even His apparently harsh rebukes were not personal vilifications, no expressions of hatred, but words of warning to show His opponent the foolishness of his self-hardening. In the midst of the most bitter sufferings, as when He was nailed to the cross, He did not threaten His jubilant persecutors, but, instead, pleaded with His heavenly Father to forgive them their sin. Far from seeking His own revenge, He placed the entire matter into the hands of His heavenly Father, the just Judge, that He might adjust the affair as He should think best. Surely we believers that

confess Christ, that bear His name, should be willing to bear His reproach with the same patience. (Kretzmann)

*entrusting himself.* Cf. 4:19. – The verbs in this verse indicate repeated and ongoing action. This means that he was under constant pressure. But, Jesus merely leaves everything in the Father's hands. Jesus, to, remembers the Word which says: "Vengeance is mine. I will repay says the Lord." (CSB)

He relied on His Father, who will justly punish the wicked and reward the righteous (cf 4:19; Mt 10:28). (TLSB)

Isaiah 53:7, He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

**2:24 bore our sins.** See Isa 53:12. Although dealing with the example set by Christ, Peter touches also on the redemptive work of Christ, which has significance far beyond that of setting an example. Peter here points to the substitutionary character of the atonement. Christ, like the sacrificial lamb of the OT, died for our sins, the innocent for the guilty. (CSB)

Death is the consequence of sin (Rm 6:23). Christ's death was for our sin and not His own. (TLSB)

Christ, of whom it had been stated that He had no sin, stepped into our place and took upon Himself the burden of our sins, as our great Substitute. They were laid upon His body, His person: He was considered the greatest sinner of all times. (Kretzmann)

Assuming that most of the readers of 1 Peter were converts, the concept of substitution in OT sacrifices must have been unknown to them. The man bringing a creature to be sacrificed had to identify himself with his offering by laying a hand on its head (Lev. 1:4). In so doing, his guilt was transferred" to the lamb (or another creature he brought). Leviticus 16 spells out the prescribed procedure in regard to the scapegoat. While this had great meaning for the Israelites, Peter does not discuss the practice that foreshadowed the Messiah but rather immediately identifies him: Example and Substitute. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

Other NT descriptions of Christ our Substitute: Rom. 3:25 – "as a sacrifice of atonement" (for all); Rom. 5:6-8 – "for the ungodly," "for us"; 2 Cor. 5:21 – "made him...to be sin for us"; Gal. 2:20 – "gave himself for me"; Gal. 3:13 – "becoming a curse for us"; Heb. 2:9 – "might taste death for everyone." Our Lord was certainly conscious of His role as Substitute: "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45). "This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Jn. 6:51). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

The full import of Christ taking our place could hardly be better expressed than in the words of Luther: "He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: 'Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them'" (LW, 26:280) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

In this passage Christ is both the Priest and the Lamb. Peter called the cross a “tree, just as the pole on which evildoers were hanged is called a tree.”

Isaiah 53:8b, 12b, “For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken” ... “For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Galatians 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”

*tree.* A figurative reference to the cross. (CSB)

Thus He assumed also the guilt of our sins, He took upon Himself their punishment. He ascended the wooden altar of the cross, the accursed tree, loaded down with their terrible weight. And all this He did in order to give us the benefit of His suffering and death. (Kretzmann)

*that we might die to sins and live to righteousness.* † Cf. Ro 6:3–14. Peter stresses the bearing of the cross on our sanctification. As a result of Christ’s death on the cross, believers are dead to sin so that they may live new lives and present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness (CSB)

Because of Christ’s crucifixion, believers are dead to sin, so they may live new lives and present themselves to God as instruments of righteousness. (TLSB)

It is now possible for us, having gotten rid of our sins in the manner indicated, to spend our entire life in living in conformity with the holy will of God, in true righteousness. Without the vicarious suffering and death of Christ we should never have been able to reach this state, to obtain this ability; but faith in His redemption gives us the power. (Kretzmann)

*you have been healed.* † See Isa 53:5; not generally viewed as a reference to physical healing, but to spiritual healing. It is another way of asserting that Christ’s death brings salvation to those who trust in him. – We have been set free from sin. Redemption from sin, the guilt, punishment, and power of sin, the redemption which is made known to sinners in the Gospel, has this effect that they now serve the righteousness. (CSB)

We find life and forgiveness because of Christ’s suffering. Luther: “We crucified Him with our sins. We are still far from suffering what He suffered. Therefore if you are a pious Christian, you should tread in the footsteps of the Lord and have compassion on those who harm you. You should also pray for them and ask God not to punish them. For they do far more harm to their souls than they do to your body. If you take this to heart, you will surely forget about your own sorrow and suffer gladly. Here we should be mindful of the fact that formerly we, too, led the kind of unchristian life that they lead, but that we have now been converted through Christ” (AE 30:86). (TLSB)

He became wounded that we might be healed, since He became sick that we might be made whole. What an inspiring example, what a compelling motive, what a divine source of power! (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:5c, “and by his wounds we are healed.”

**2:25** *were straying like sheep* – Wandering from God’s ways into sin. (TLSB)

That is true of all men by nature; they have turned away from the God of their life, of their salvation, following their own sinful bent, walking the way of sin and of destruction. It is due to the redemption of Christ and to the proclamation of this redemption in the Word of the Gospel that we have been turned, brought back, literally turned ourselves back, from the ways of sin and death to God and life, by the power transmitted to us in the Gospel-call. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 53:6a, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;”

*have now returned* – The Greek verb means “to become converted”, “to turn oneself about”, never “to be converted”. Man is the subject of conversion. It is man who turns away his heart, mind, and thoughts, his will from sin, from the power of Satan and turns towards God and what is divine. (Acts 26:18) To be sure, God is the Author of conversion. It is God and God alone, who through the Gospel is responsible for this act of mind and will, for the conversion from sin and the return to God in the heart of man. We have been healed by Christ’s wounds. (Stoeckhardt)

Conversion and new birth are essentially identical concepts. The apostle had stated in 1:3, 23, that God according to His great mercy had begotten us again by means of His living Word. In 2:12 he had said that the Gentiles will glorify God on the day of His visitation. Nothing is more absurd than to infer synergistic conclusions from the active verb “to convert oneself”, as though man himself had to contribute something towards his conversion. No, conversion is solely the work of God’s power and grace. The sinner converts himself, and this change of mind God and God alone works in him. (Stoeckhardt)

*Shepherd.* A concept raised here in connection with the allusion to the wandering sheep of Isa 53. The sheep had wandered from their shepherd, and to their Shepherd (Christ) they have now returned. (CSB)

The chief Shepherd calls His sheep back into His fold through His Gospel. With His Word, He feeds and cares for those who were perishing. (TLSB)

These final words of this chapter comfort suffering Christians who might think their sufferings prove they have been abandoned. (PBC)

In accepting God as our Father, we, at the same time, have turned to Christ, to the Bishop and Shepherd of our souls, to Him who, as the one Good Shepherd, brought us home out of the desert of sin and is now daily leading us in the green pastures of His gracious Word. Truly, the sheep of Christ are provided for in a wonderful way, they live secure under the guiding staff of Him who laid down His life for them. (Kretzmann)

Peter’s final words in chapter 2 comfort suffering Christians who might think that their sufferings prove they have been abandoned. When people come to faith, Christ accepts a solemn responsibility toward them. He commits Himself to be their Shepherd, that is, the one who takes responsibility to guide, protect, and feed His sheep. He is also our overseer, the one who watches over Israel, who never slumbers nor sleep, the one who will bring us from this sad world to a better one of His own making. (PBC)

*Overseer.* Christ (cf. 5:2, 4; Ac 20:28). Elders are to be both shepherds and overseers, i.e., they are to look out for the welfare of the flock. These are not two separate offices or functions; the second term is a further explanation of the first. (CSB)

On the one hand He is the loving, gentle, compassionate Guide, and on the other the Overseers, an authority figure. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

**2:13–25** Scripture never teaches that those who follow Jesus will be immune to suffering. Just as Jesus, our sinless Savior, faced unjust suffering and death, so we may be called to take up our own cross to follow Him. But if God gives us a cross to carry, He also promises to give us the strength to bear it by faith. Christ our Shepherd calls us by name, brings us into His fold through the Gospel, and cares for us in the midst of suffering. We are honored to follow Him. • Gracious God, we praise You for Your mercy through Your Son, who bore our sins in His body on the tree. Give us grace to reach out to our enemies with the power of Your Gospel, which works faith and saves eternally. Amen. (TLSB)