

An In-Depth Study of the First Letter of Apostle Peter

[Part 3]

1 Peter 2:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.”*

We are again confronted with the word “*therefore*”, so we need to go back and review all we learnt in the whole of the first chapter of this pastoral letter.

Peter then shows us what our reaction should be to what he has already written and we have read.

The Greek word translated “*rid yourself*” is “*apōtithēmi*” a very vivid word used for stripping off one’s clothes, as we would a spoiled garment.

This list of negative attributes are what we find in this society that is influenced by Satan.

“*Malice*” – the Greek word is “*kakia*” the most general word used for all that is evil and wicked. [Also see **1 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Corinthians 14:20; Ephesians 4:31; Colossians 3:8; Titus 3:3; Romans 1:29**]

This is an attitude of mind associated with the heathen world that has **not** experienced the love and compassion of our Creator God.

Where such an attitude resides in a person, Christian love **cannot** enter into the mind and heart of that person.

“*Deceit*” – the Greek word is “*dōlōs*” referring to being two-faced, using deception to attain what is desired.

This is an adulterated motive for personal gain.

“*Hypocrisy*” – the Greek word “*hupōkrisis*” referring to playacting, when a person is acting the part of a Christian, using the right words, but concealing their real motives.

In Greek drama the actor could hold a mask in front of their face to hide the real person who is speaking the part.

Some have joined a Christian fellowship for their own profit and prestige, **not** to live as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, serving the needs of other human beings.

“*Envy*” – Greek word “*phthōnōs*” – meaning ill-will towards others.

As long as self remains active in the life of a person, envy is bound to influence that person with thoughts that may lead to acts of ill-will towards the person they envy.

Envy can only die when self dies.

“*Slander*” – the Greek word used is “*katalalia*” referring to disparagement, gossip, speaking evil of another person, usually when the victim is **not** present to defend themselves.

There is nothing more destructive of brotherly love and Christian unity, than such back-biting gossip.

Such gossip produces trouble and heartache for the victims and any fellowship.

These are attitudes of mind that a re-born Christian must strip off and then clothe themselves with the attributes of Jesus Christ and our Loving Heavenly Father.

1 Peter 2:2-3 [NIV] *“Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”*

One characteristic found in all young children is that they desire to grow up like their older brother or sister.

The only way we can grow spiritually is to crave pure spiritual milk, referring to God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

Peter has just been talking about the eternal word of God that brought about our new birth [**1 Peter 1:23-25**].

This same Word will enable us to mature as new-born Christians. [**1 Corinthians 3:1-2**]

Hebrews 4:12-13 [NIV] *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”*

The Word of God, the Christian Bible, will penetrate our human spirit and our mind to reveal to us the true motives that guide our life, so we can then, with the Holy Spirit’s power, re-educate our mind and human spirit.

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Re-education is the only way that the attributes we are to cast off will be replaced with God-like attributes, thus fulfilling God’s main purpose for our existence, to produce in us His *“likeness.”* [**Genesis 1:26**]

The Greek word translated *“good”* is *“chrēstōs”* referring to an attribute of our Lord, Greek word *“kuriōs”*, referring directly to Jesus Christ.

This attribute of Jesus Christ is very encouraging for it refers to One who is kind, pleasant and easy to be entreated.

One who is fit and able to be used, specifically for our salvation.

This is the response we receive from Jesus Christ when we accept Him as our Lord and Master.

2 Peter 1:1 [NIV] *“Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:”*

The apostle Peter introduces himself as the bondsman of Jesus Christ first and foremost, and then as an apostle [one sent to fulfil a job of work.]

This acceptance of Jesus Christ is basic to our baptism, by total immersion, at the beginning of our Christian life.

The three questions that we are asked prior to our baptism are –

a) Do you repent of your sins?

- b) Do you accept the blood of Jesus Christ for the cleansing of your sins?
- c) Do you accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord [Greek “*kuriōs*” master and director of our life.]

For a fuller understanding study our articles on **Romans 6:1-13**, and read **Acts 20:28** showing that we are the purchased slaves of Jesus Christ.

The price Jesus Christ paid to purchase us was His blood sacrifice on the cross.

Accepting this humbling fact is the first step towards spiritual growth in our new life as a Christian.

A true Christian has no personal rights, only personal responsibilities.

John 1:12-13 [NIV] *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

The word translated “right” is “*exousia*” referring to ability **not** a personal right.

Our ability to become a created child of God is totally dependent on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as our only Saviour and the working in and through us of the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 2:4 [NIV] *“As you come to him, the living Stone, rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him,”*

The “living stone” is directly referring to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is this “living stone” in two ways.

The foundational stone –

Matthew 16:13-18 [NIV] *“When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*

God revealed to Peter [Greek “*pētrōs*” referring to a pebble or small piece of rock] that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, and it was on this revealed understanding that Jesus the rock [Greek “*petra*” referring to a massive foundational rock] that Jesus was going to build His church, the Christian Church.

1 Corinthians 3:11 [NIV] *“For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”*

Jesus Christ is the only foundational rock on which we can build our Christian life.

1 Corinthians 10:1-4 [NIV] *“For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.”*

Jesus Christ has always been the foundational Rock on which God builds His people and church.

Exodus 17:5-6 [NIV] *“The LORD answered Moses, “Walk on ahead of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. **Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.**” So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel.”*

Jesus Christ provided life-sustaining water for the Israelites in the wilderness.

The capstone –

Psalms 118:22 [NIV] *“The stone the builders rejected has become the **capstone;**”*

The capstone was the stone at the centre of an arch that held all the other stones of the arch together.

Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord is what will hold all Christians in a fellowship together, and allow them to mature.

John 1:1-4, 10-11 [NIV] *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.” ... “**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.**”*

Where Jesus Christ is rejected as Saviour and Lord there is **no unity or eternal hope**, people continue to live in darkness.

1 Peter 2:5 [NIV] *“you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”*

The word translated “stone” is “*lithōs*” referring to a stone that has been worked on and shaped into something of use or value.

These “*living stones*” are to become three things that God can use.

A spiritual house – the Greek word translated “house” is “*oikos*” referring to a related family.

In this context God’s created family.

1 Timothy 3:15 [NIV] *“if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”*

It is within this “household” that the foundational truths of Christianity should be taught.

Holy priesthood –

Revelation 1:4-6 [NIV] *“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, **the firstborn from the dead**, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and **has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father**, to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”*

The future roll of “*firstborn*” Christians is to become priests, that is, teachers of those who do **not** yet know Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Revelation 5:9-10 [NIV] *“And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”*

Jesus Christ has purged all Christians by His sacrificial blood to become priests [teachers] in God's service.

Spiritual sacrifices – the willingness to sacrifice self for the benefit of others does **not** end with this physical life.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, **this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

We do **not** stop worshipping our Creator God ever, for the more we come to know Him the more we will wish to worship Him by laying down our lives for others to come into the created family of God, also accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Revelation 20:11-13 [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.”*

This is describing the work of teachers [priests] as the “books” of the Christian Bible are opened up for their understanding for the first time.

1 Peter 2:6 [NIV] *“For in Scripture it says: **“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”**”*

Peter now backs up what he is saying by quoting from Old Testament scriptures that were well-known to his Jewish readers.

Isaiah 28:16 [NIV] *“So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: **“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.”**”*

Jews saw this as a prophecy of the longed-for Messiah.

1 Peter 2:7 [NIV] *“Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, **“The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,”**”*

Peter quotes from **Psalms 118:29**.

Jesus Christ also referred to this as He was rejected by the Jews in His time on earth as their promised Messiah. [**Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17**]

In each case it was accompanied with a parable given as a warning to religious people who were failing to accept Him as the Son of God and their only Saviour.

People who believed they could earn eternal life by their religious acts.

1 Peter 2:8 [NIV] *“and, **“A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.”** They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for.”*

Peter quotes from **Isaiah 8:14**. A warning to the nation of Israel, who were about to be taken captive by the king of Assyria, because they had rejected the One and only true God.

The “Rock” which caused them to fall was the future physical Jesus Christ.

People today continue to stumble and fall into sin because they do **not** accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and **only** hope of eternal life.

Ignoring or disobeying the message of salvation that all of the Christian Church should be preaching.

These people have stumbled over the One Person who could give to them meaning in their lives.

1 Peter 2:9-10 [NIV] *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of **him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light**. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*

Peter once again reminds all Christians as to how very special they are in God’s eyes.

People who have been brought out of the deceiving darkness that God has allowed Satan to blanket them with, into the light of the message that Jesus Christ has brought from God the Father to all humanity.

John 1:1-5 [NIV] *“In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God**. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**”*

The Word [Jesus Christ v14] is the light that came to this world to illuminate the character and the plans that God the Father has for all humanity.

As yet the vast majority of humanity still remain in the darkness of Satan’s deception.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 [NIV] *“For such men are **false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ**. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.”*

Satan is using false ministers to deceive people, masquerading as ministers of Jesus Christ, but **not** preaching the words of the message He brought from the Father, thus blinding millions of people in every generation.

Every Christian needs to understand how precious they are to God the Father because they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and receiving mercy from God because of their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 2:11-12 [NIV] *“Dear friends, I urge you, **as aliens and strangers in the world**, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”*

Again Paul reminds Christians that they are **not** part of the world’s society and culture.

Paul is following the direct teaching of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 5:13-16 [NIV] *“**You are the salt of the earth**. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. **You are the light of the world**. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, **let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”*

Christians are to become people who add flavour to life through the message they preach of forgiveness and mercy.

Christians are to live lives that will be an example of loving acts of kindness and love that will illuminate a different way to live that will bring others eventually to praise their Creator God.

This realisation of who true Christians really are may **not** dawn in the minds of the vast majority of people until the return of Jesus Christ as Lord and Judge.