

# **1 Peter 1:13-25**

## ***A Summons to Walk in Godliness***

### **SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS**

The apostle's words in this part of chapter 1 are closely connected with his previous statements. The very fact that the readers are "exiles" whose citizenship is in the heavenly homeland must motivate them to live as aliens in this world. They are labeled "separatists" – see question 1. They are required to live "separate", that is, apart from the sinful, heathen life. That is why the apostle admonishes his readers to demonstrate their alienation from the world in a walk of sanctification (vv. 13-17). The fact that God has chosen them to this state of nobility (see v. 2) should motivate them time and again to remember what a great price was paid to redeem them from destruction (vv. 18-21). This must be evident in their love and earthly relationships because they were reborn through the imperishable seed of God's Word.

### **MAIN THOUGHTS**

Verse 13 is the link between what has preceded and what is to follow. In the discussion of this part of the letter, we must pay attention to the purpose of and the reason for Peter's writing. Read what is written about this under the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> section of the introductory outline. It is the laxness, the worldliness, and spiritual blindness of believers that weighs so heavily on the apostle's mind. That is why he admonishes his readers to live according to their position as children of God, as citizens of another and better Kingdom. As they await their inheritance, their joy must become apparent in their walk of life. As children of God they must live holy lives in this world through God-pleasing obedience (vv. 14-17). For this reason they must always remember that they are one with the Saviour, not only in being made alike in his death, but also in being made alike in his resurrection, because they are his precious purchase (vv. 18-21). A careful godly walk will become evident not only on the outside, but also on the inside. The communion of saints must not be a matter simply of words, but must be practiced daily, for the regenerating Word requires this as a consequence of their faith (vv. 22-25).

### **NOTES ON THE TEXT**

#### ***Verse 13***

"Therefore" shows that a conclusion is drawn from what the apostle said before (vv. 1-12). The phrase "prepare your minds for action" is an image taken from the world of sports in those days, and thus addresses the readers directly. The same applies to the next image: "be self-controlled". Champions had to train; asceticism, abstaining from any kind of alcohol, was part of that training — see question 2.

The Greek word for "minds" means the ability to distinguish and to understand with one's mind.

Some exegetes are of the opinion that "fully" modifies "sober", completely sober, but that is wrong: it modifies "hope", as in the NIV. It is not that the believers do not believe, but that they do not believe with spiritual strength. Their hope has declined and has become weak, because they have permitted it to become clouded by the difficulties of their arduous life.

"Revealed" or "appearance" means a visit by a socially or politically prominent person for example, the visit of a king to a certain district or city. Coins have been found made in honour of a visit by Caesar on which the same Greek word appears.

### ***Verse 14***

"Obedient children" means: "children of obedience" (as opposed to "children of wrath"). This indicates their origin; they are "born out of obedience". Their existence is determined entirely by the obedience of faith.

The Greek word for "conform" is derived from "scheme", meaning form, bearing, style. They must not demonstrate the life style of children of the world, but must be children of obedience, children of God.

"Evil desires" or "lusts" [NASB] indicate sinful, carnal desires.

"Ignorance" meant not to know or discern the truth. Herein lies the element of guilt (cf. Ephesians 4:18; Romans 1:18-23). In this case, Peter means especially the absence of the right knowledge of God.

### ***Verse 15***

It says here: "the Holy One has called you", (as in the NASB), which indicates God the Lord.

"So" means "to agree with".

A norm is pointed out here: the hallmark of being a child of God is sanctification. "In all you do" and "behaviour" [NASB] denote the way one reveals oneself in life.

### ***Verse 16***

In this case the apostle appeals to Scripture. Think of Leviticus 19:2; 11:44; Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6.

### ***Verse 17***

"Call on a Father" alludes to addressing God as Father (cf. The Lord's Prayer and Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6) which was a privilege bestowed on the believers in the covenant, the same covenant which was established with Israel — see question 3. It states: the One who judges without favouritism (cf. Romans 2:11; James 2:1). This indicates an impartial judge. The verb form used in the original indicates that God is judging continuously and permanently. "Each man" shows that the judgment is strictly personal! (cf. Psalm 62:13; Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10.)

"Work" indicates everything a person does, thinks, and says, taken as a connected whole. Everything must be done "in reverent fear", i.e. in childlike fearfulness and respect, including an abhorrence of anything that is unholy.

The "time of your stay upon earth" [NASB] ("time" means the whole duration; "stay") means to be a sojourner, (cf. Acts 13:17) or an alien, that is someone who has no civil rights. The believers are "strangers" here on earth; their domicile is in the heavenly homeland.

### ***Verse 18***

In verses 14-17, the apostle shows them their calling. They are not to renounce their alienation. In verses 18-21 he reminds them of their nobility; they have been chosen to be children of God. The call to sanctification is emphasised by the great price which was paid for their redemption.

To "know" or to be clearly conscious is a knowledge that belongs to the knowledge of God as Father.

"Perishable" is derived from the same word as "incorruptible" This is another word for "imperishable" which is used in verse 4 (see note on this text in the previous outline), meaning corruption from the outside — see question 4.

"Redeemed" means to buy freedom (cf. Titus 2:14; Luke 24:21). The verb connotes the purchase of slaves in the market place.

"Empty way" refers to unfruitful, useless dealings in the world — see question 5.

"Handed down... from your forefathers" points to the heathen background of the readers. Peter would hardly speak of the Jews in this way.

### ***Verse 19***

"Precious" is used here in the sense of valuable or costly.

"As" [RSV] indicates the nature of Christ's sacrifice.

"Without blemish or defect", points to the perfection of Christ. Also outwardly he was not defiled by any wrong. The word "lamb" is reminiscent of the Passover lamb (cf. Exodus 12; Isaiah 53) — see question 6.

### ***Verse 20***

"Chosen", "foreknown" [NASB] or "destined" [RSV] must be explained in the light of Exodus 12:3-6. "Before the creation of the world" indicates "from all eternity".

"Revealed" or "appeared" [NASB] points to the historical fact of the incarnation of the Word when God visited the world in his Son (cf. Luke 1:78).

"In these last times" or "at the end of the times" [RSV] means at the very end of times. With Christ's coming in the flesh, the last dispensation, the age of Pentecost, began.

"For your sake" means: also for your sake.

### ***Verse 21***

"Who through him are believers in God" [NASB] refers to those, who through him, believe in God. Pay attention to the background of his book in interpreting what follows in this verse! The wondrous power of the Father, in the exaltation and glorification of his Son, is so great and comforting, that you, in your difficult, stormy life, do not have to fear: "so your faith and hope are in God".

### ***Verse 22***

When Peter speaks of "yourselves" or "your souls" [NASB], he means the inner man.

"The truth", namely the truth of God, has been revealed in Christ, and laid down in the Gospel.

"Sincere" denotes non-hypocritical: the Greek word is connected with our word "hypocrite" — see question 7. "Purified" here does not mean made free from sin, but to be made upright.

The Greek word for “deeply” comes from a verb which means “to stretch out” (Matthew 8:3). Here it indicates a continuous action. We must never give up loving one another.

### ***Verse 23***

“Born again” means to be transformed into a new life. This transformation comes about by the “Word of God” (cf. Isaiah 55:11; John 6:63; 12:48; Hebrews 4:12) — see question 8.

### ***Verses 24 and 25***

Peter proves the glory of God's Word from the Scriptures by citing Isaiah 40:6-8 even though he does indicate that it is taken from the Old Testament. In verse 25b he uses another Greek word for “Word”, namely, the spoken word. This indicates the preaching of the Gospel — see question 9.

## **FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Separatists are those who keep themselves separate or apart from something. Should those who remain standing on the foundations of God's Word, and who are liberated from the sin of the church (16<sup>th</sup> century, 1834, 1944) be labeled separatists? Are they sectarian? What defines a sect?
2. Is it evident in the Scriptures that the New Testament writers frequently used images from their world of sports (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Hebrews 12:1,4)?
3. Did the Church of the old dispensation also call God “Father” (cf. Deuteronomy 32:6; 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 3:4, 19; Malachi 1:6; 2:10)?
4. Which answer in the Catechism is based on verses 18-21?
5. Is there a basis in verse 18 for the forming of a biblical viewpoint on the entertainment industry?
6. What does the word “Passover” mean? What was commemorated during the annual Passover feast?
7. Does Scripture speak of the sin of hypocrisy with respect to believers as well (cf. Psalm 32:2-3; Galatians 2:11-14; James 3:13-18; James 4:8)?
8. Can we, on the basis of verses 23-25, construct an argument contradicting the Barthian teaching that the Bible is a dead book?
9. What are the standards every sermon of a Minister of the Word must meet?

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