

First Peter 4:7-19



Monday Night Meeting




“Preach the Gospel at all times
and if necessary, use words.”

- ❧ Salutation (1:1-2)
- ❧ God's Gracious Activity in the Lives of Suffering Believers (1:3-2:10)
- ❧ The Mission of Suffering Believers in the World (2:11-4:6)
- ❧ The Mission of Suffering Believers in the Church (4:7-5:11)
 - ❧ General Strategy: Knowledge and Love (4:7-8)
 - ❧ Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)
 - ❧ **Love:** Serve one another using your gifts (4:9-11)
 - ❧ **Knowledge:** Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)
 - ❧ **Love:** Serve one another fulfilling your role (5:1-5)
 - ❧ **Knowledge:** Understand Satan's purpose in suffering (5:6-9)
 - ❧ The Promise of Salvation (5:10-11)
- ❧ Final Greeting (5:12-14)

Introduction



Transition

 Peter ends his letter by focusing on the church. One's witness in the world cannot be maintained in isolation of the believing community. Strength and perspective to respond rightly to trials depends on participating in the life of the local church.

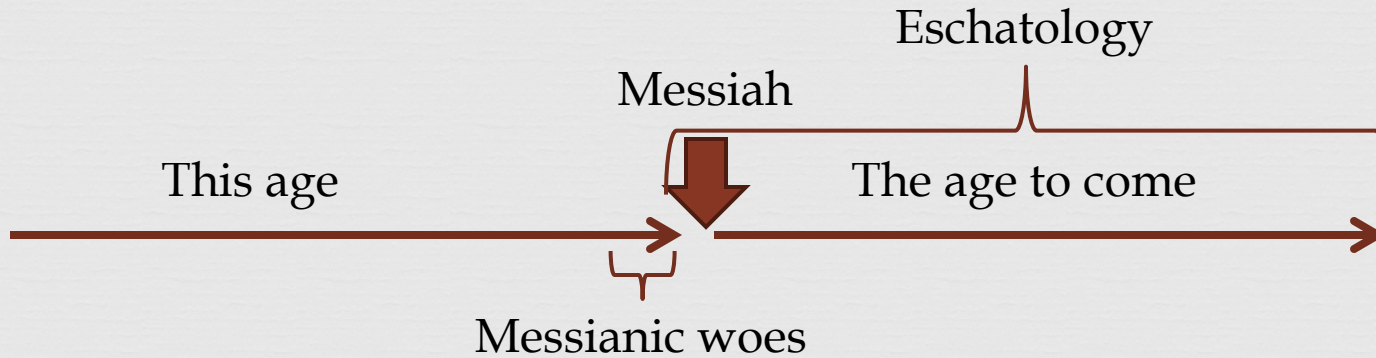
Introduction



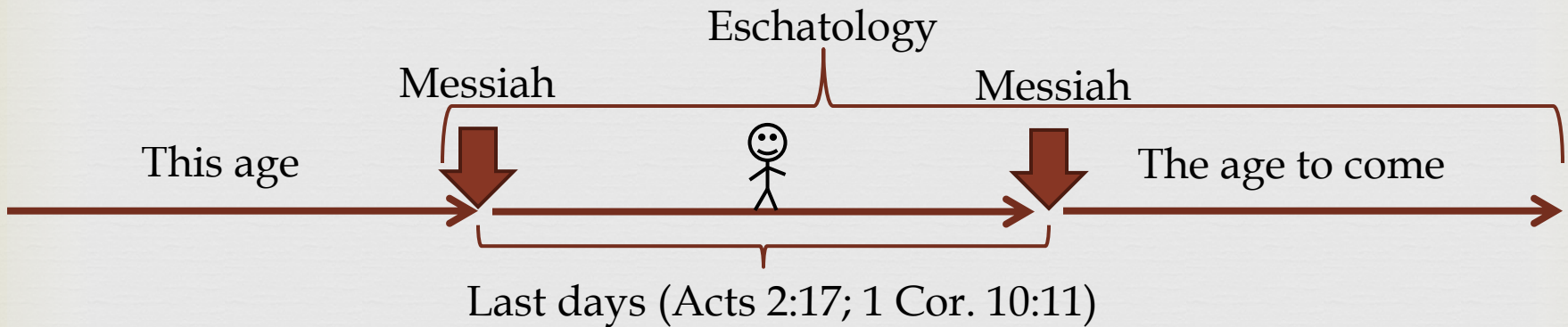
☞ *Jewish and Christian Eschatology*

☞ **Eschatology:** beliefs concerning the final events in human history.

Jewish Eschatology



Christian Eschatology



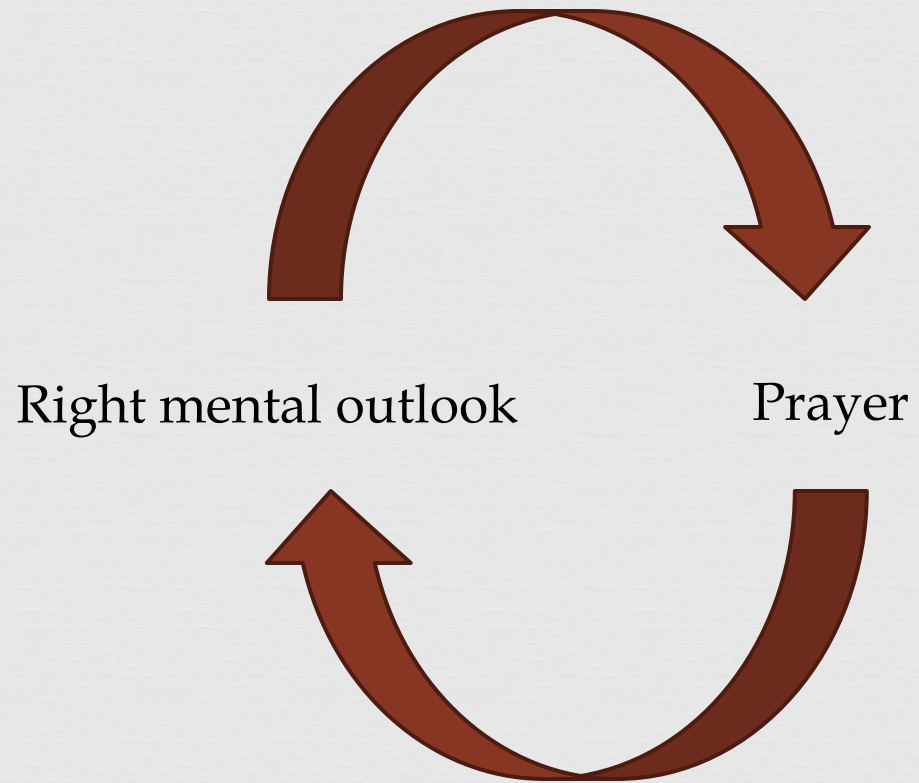
General Strategy (4:7-8)



☞ **Knowledge:** *Mentally ready (4:7)*

☞ **Command: Be of sound judgment** (reasonable, sensible, be in one's right mind) & **sober** (clear headed, well-balanced, self-controlled, free from mental and spiritual drunkenness, fuzzy thinking, confusion)

☞ **Purpose:** "Proper prayer is not an "opiate" or escape, but rather a function of clear vision and a seeking of even clearer vision from God" (Davids 157).



General Strategy (4:7-8)



☞ **Love:** *Fervently love one another (4:8)*

☞ **above all have fervent love=** prioritize this

☞ **REASON: love covers a multitude of sin=** “love will forgive or overlook the faults of others in the church and thus is a most valuable virtue in a community that needs to preserve its solidarity in the face of persecution” (Davids 158).

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Love: Serve one another using your gifts (4:9-11)



- ❧ **Hospitality:** By stranger loving one another without grumbling (onomatopoeia= gognusmou).
- ❧ **Spiritual Gifts:**
 - ❧ **Right Perspective:** Spiritual gifts are given to us as stewards (a slave responsible for managing his master's property). Spiritual gifts are a means God uses within the church to bless and grace his people. These gifts of God's grace are multifaceted (same word as in 1:6: *various trials*).
 - ❧ **Kinds of Gifts:** Speaking gifts & Serving gifts
 - ❧ **Purpose of gifts:** For the glory of God, not the glory of man.

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Knowledge: Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)



☞ **Exhortation & Encouragement:** Don't be surprised but rejoice (4:12-14)

☞ **Fiery ordeal=** Though some have attempted to connect this to a specific event (being burned at the stake or losing house because of arson), yet Peter is most likely using this phrase metaphorically drawing upon the process of subjecting precious metals to intense heat in order to refine them and test their genuineness.

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Knowledge: Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)



- ☞ **Rejoice**= Joy here must be understood as an expression of hope. It is a joy that arises, not from the suffering, but from looking ahead to God's promise to save us.
- ☞ **Our response to suffering determines our future experience:** Our capacity to rejoice when Jesus comes back is determined by our response to present trials. Jesus's coming will not spell joy for those who refuse to participate in the sufferings of Christ.
- ☞ **Our response to suffering determines our present experience:** Blessing: We experience and others observe the manifestation of God's presence by His Spirit (Acts 6:15; Is. 11:2).



✧ **Isaiah 11:2** And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Knowledge: Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)



- ❧ **Caution:** Make sure you are suffering for the right reason (4:15-16)
 - ❧ **Sharing the sufferings of Christ means** suffering as a result of your identification with Christ, “Christian” (4:16). You can’t share in Christ’s sufferings without first sharing in his salvation.
 - ❧ **Sharing the sufferings of Christ means** suffering according to God’s will (4:19).

Excursus: Theology of Judgment



- ☞ The Bible declares God to be the ultimate judge of all men. God is not just a future tense judge; He is a present tense judge. Mankind lives under the watchful gaze of God.
- ☞ The unrighteous reject God's evaluation and in turn subject God to their own judgment.
- ☞ The righteous are those who have submitted themselves to God's judgment and have accepted His offer of forgiveness through his Son Jesus Christ.

Excursus: Theology of Judgment



- ❧ Consequently, the righteous are those who submit to and welcome God's judgment and scrutiny. They seek to live lives that are approved by God and meet His standards. Like the Psalmist they cry, "Prove me, O LORD, and try me; test my heart and my mind." (26:2) It is the approved who seek approval.
- ❧ God's judgment of approval can only fall on those who are genuine, those who have been tested and found true. God's testing comes in the form of suffering. The metaphor Scripture consistently uses is that of testing gold or silver by fire.
 - ❧ Fire evaluates the gold.
 - ❧ Fire purifies the gold.
 - ❧ Only that which has evidence of gold is placed into the fire.

Excursus: Theology of Judgment



✧ God tries his people, “in the expectation and belief that, whatever of dross may be found mingled with it, yet it is not all dross, but that some good metal, and better now than before, will come forth from the fiery trial” (Richard Trench).

Excursus: Theology of Judgment



☞ **Summary:** Those who yearn for God's approval should expect trials because they are God's means of testing leading to approval. This is why Paul describes the believer as one who rejoices in tribulation because he knows that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance character (approval), and approval hope" (Rom 5:3-4).

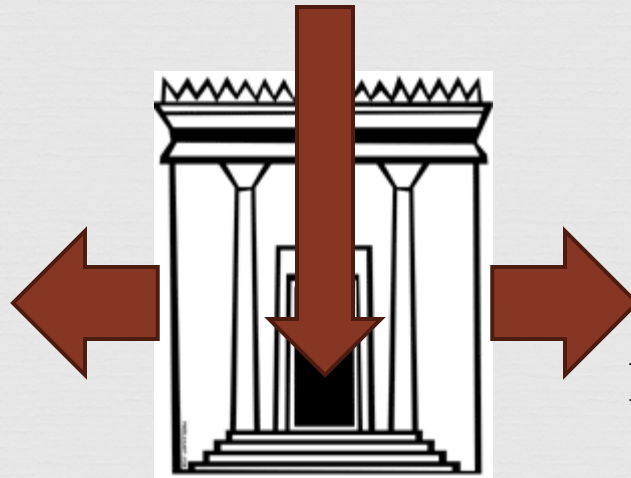
Malachi 3:1-3



☞ "...the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD."

Christ has taken up
residence in His temple
(the church)
by His Spirit

The privilege
of God's
presence (4:14)



The pain
of God's
purging (4:17)

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Knowledge: Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)



- ☞ **Explanation:** God is purifying his people (4:17-18)
 - ☞ **It is time for judgment to begin**= Though God has always judged his people in this way, yet with the coming of Christ, Peter sees it as happening with greater intensity and in an eschatological sense. Our trials are evidence that the process of final judgment has begun. (Mal. 3:1-4)
 - ☞ **with difficulty**= not barely saved... BUT saved through hardship.
 - ☞ **Main Point:** It is better to suffer now for doing right, than later for doing wrong. “In other words, if God’s justice is not relaxed even for his own people but metes out assorted temporal judgments, ...how can the wicked imagine that they will escape the severity of the justice of God?” (Carson, Beale 1042)

Specific Strategy (4:9-5:11)

Knowledge: Understand God's purpose in suffering (4:12-19)



- ☞ **Application:** Trust God by doing right (4:19)
 - ☞ **Faithful Creator**= God is simultaneously good and all powerful. The God who gave us life can sustain us through life.
 - ☞ **entrust your soul to God**= “to deposit money with a trusted friend. **HOW?** In doing right! (our actions reveal who we trust) This is very practical for Peter: obeying your master; submitting to your husband, respecting authority...
 - ☞ Obedience flows out of trust and faith. Disobedience has its ultimate basis in a heart that does not trust the goodness and power of God.

Question for August 12



- ❧ What does the role of elders have to do with the reality of persecution? What is unusual about Peter spending 4 verses addressing elders and only one addressing young people? How does this contrast with 2:13-3:12?