

JAMES & I PETER

You, God, and a KJV Bible

By Eric Neumann

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Quotations

The only material quoted in this book is the Word of God in the King James Version. No commentaries or scholars are quoted, because God's Word is important, not man's word. As such, I encourage all readers to be good Bereans by searching the scriptures to see if what I have said is true (Acts 17:11). It is okay if you do not agree with what I say, but it is not okay if your disagreement is not based upon the Word of God in its proper context, which involves "rightly dividing the Word of Truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

Goal

The goal of this Bible study is to cast "down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and [bring] into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Corinthians 10:5) so that members of the body of Christ may "come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Contact the author

Therefore, the author encourages any disagreements be brought to his attention so that future versions of this Bible study can be changed if deemed necessary.

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Books by Eric Neumann

All books are available in paperback and in Kindle formats by going to: www.amazon.com/author/bibledivider. You may also access the author's sermons by going to: <http://www.youtube.com/user/bibledivider/videos>.

Eric has been working on a Bible study guide since 2011. So far, the following books are available:

Matthew

Mark

Luke

John

Acts

Romans

Hebrews

James & I Peter

Revelation

In addition, the following books are available:

A Bible Believer's Bible Summary: How to Understand the Bible – Section 1 is a narrative of the Bible from beginning to end, while section 2 gives a one-sentence summary and a key verse from each book of the Bible. (84 pages)

Bible Per-VERSIONS: How Satan Changes God's Word to Lead You Astray – Over 850 Bible verses are listed in the KJV, NIV, NKJV, and NLT with comments to show how modern versions stray from the truth of God found in the KJV. A topical guide and an explanation of why modern versions are perverted are given. (248 pages)

How to Be Led by the Holy Spirit: Discerning God's Will for Your Life – This book examines a megachurch pastor's decision-making process, compares this process to scripture, and shows God's way to be led by the Spirit in making decisions in your life. (34 pages)

A Bible Believer Critique of Ironside's "Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth": A Defense of Paul's Mystery – (150 pages)

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James Introduction

Like Hebrews, **James** is written to Israel for the tribulation period, as they are scattered among the heathen (1:1), according to the fifth and final cycle of chastisement in Leviticus 26:33. Like Hebrews, the church today tries to apply it directly to themselves. This has caused great error in that people do not even know what the gospel is for today's dispensation. For example, those, not believing in our eternal security, mentioned in Romans 5:11 and Ephesians 1:13, will run to James 2:17 to say that we must have faith plus works in order to be saved. Then, the Pentecostals will run to James 5:14-15 to say that God does miraculous, physical healings today. All we have to do is anoint someone with oil and pray over them. But, when healing does not come, they get depressed, thinking that they do not have enough faith to be healed.

Thus, trying to apply directly the book of James today is probably responsible for more people not hearing the true gospel for today and people wrongly thinking that God does physical miracles today than any other misapplication of other books of the Bible is responsible. From 1:1, it is clear that the book is really written to the persecuted, little flock of Israel and is meant to give them (not us) sound doctrine so that they will have faith in God's promises to them throughout the entire tribulation period. Understanding this is the only way to learn what James is saying and avoid Satan's false gospel of faith plus works that, if we follow today, will lead us straight into the lake of fire.

They are living in a time when the religion of the Antichrist will replace the commandments of God (Mark 7:8-9), such that faith in God will go by the wayside. Therefore, James 1-2 concentrate on having faith and keeping faith in God's provision, rather than trusting in the Babylonian religion of the Antichrist during the tribulation period. They also need to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22). Therefore, they are justified by faith plus works (James 2:24), instead of faith alone, like today (Romans 3:28). Chapter 3 shows how powerful words are. The practical application of this is in chapter 4 that they need to trust in the words of God found in the law (4:12), rather than trusting in the words of Satan found in the Antichrist's twisting of scripture (4:7). Chapter 5 warns against following those materially rich people, who have aligned themselves with the Antichrist (5:1-6). Instead, they need to endure tribulation (5:7-11) and help each other through prayer in order to save their souls from death (5:14-20).

Summary: James encourages the little flock of Israel to endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13) with faith plus works in line with that faith (2:17-26).

Key passage: 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

1 James is writing to the believing remnant of ISRAEL to prepare them to keep faith in God unto the end of the tribulation period (vs. 1-4), in spite of the suffering they experience. God's Word will give them the wisdom they need (v. 5) to keep the faith (v. 6). They should not place their stock in the things of the world (vs. 7-12), nor should they blame God if they succumb to temptations in the tribulation period (vs. 13-16). They should not fall into the trap of following the crowd of Jews, aligning themselves with the Antichrist, only giving lip service to God. Rather, they should have works that come from true faith in God's promises to them (vs. 19-27). These works include preaching the gospel of the kingdom to Israel (v. 22) and keeping fellow members of the little flock from taking the mark by giving them food and water (v. 27). In so doing, they will also keep themselves from taking the mark of the beast (v. 27).

1:1 The 12 tribes are the 12 tribes of Israel. Under the law, God said that, if Israel did not keep the law, He would punish them by scattering them among the Gentile nations (Leviticus 26:33). We see Israel already under this punishment under the law in John 7:35, where the Pharisees mention that the Jews are "dispersed among the Gentiles." Thus, James writes to the twelve tribes of ISRAEL, and they are in surrounding Gentile countries, and not in North America, as the Mormons would have you believe. James had to have been written before Acts 7, because the offer of the kingdom was still in effect for Israel. Thus, it is written to Israel, giving them instructions of how to keep faith in God during the entire tribulation period. It is not written to us today!

1:2 The epistle is written to the little flock of Israel. Right away, the trials of the tribulation period are mentioned. Rather than murmuring, as Israel did in the wilderness (Exodus 16:7), the little flock should actually be glad over the tribulations they face, because of the long-term effect of these tribulations. The way they will have joy in these temptations is by looking to the crown of life they will receive if they endure them (1:12). Jesus is their perfect example of such an endurance (Hebrews 12:2).

1:3 For those, who have faith in God, temptations work patience in them to wait for God to fulfill His promises to them, rather than giving up eternity for a few moments of fame and glory with the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Malachi 3:3 says that God "shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." That is what the tribulation period is all about. It is working patience in believing Israel to purify their faith in God. Ultimately, their patience is seen in that they do not take the mark of the beast or worship the image of the beast (Revelation 14:9-12). This makes the trial of their faith "much more precious than of gold" (I Peter 1:7).

1:4 In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said that Israel would not enter the kingdom of heaven unless their righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees. The Pharisees' righteousness was self-righteousness, which was as filthy rags to God (Isaiah 64:6). Israel needs God's imputed righteousness to be saved. That means they need to stop trusting in themselves and have faith in God to make them

righteous. The way they do that is by realizing that their flesh is weak so that God can be strong in them (II Corinthians 12:10). This is accomplished through the “divers temptations” (1:2) of the tribulation period that they will face. Thus, the “perfect work” of patience (1:4) is to weaken the flesh so that Israel has faith in God, such that they are saved, and they do the signs of the kingdom and preach the kingdom gospel to Israel.

They are “wanting nothing” because they can do all the signs, which are accomplished through the “prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:21) of the little flock as a result of the capital-punishment proclamation by the false prophet for those not bowing down to the image (Revelation 13:15) and the no-food proclamation for those not taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). That is the weakening of the flesh that Israel will experience in the tribulation period to have faith in God, realizing that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Jesus learned this (Hebrews 5:8) after “He had fasted forty days and forty nights” (Matthew 4:2), and the little flock will learn this, too, through the perfect work of patience in them, as they are forced to fast and pray in the Great Tribulation period, because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). This is the fire of the tribulation period that will sanctify believing Israel (Job 23:10), as symbolized by the burning bush (Exodus 3:2).

1:5-6 “If any of you lack wisdom” is given in the context of recognizing the Antichrist for who he is. We just quoted Revelation 13:17 about the mark of the beast. Well, Revelation 13:18 starts off with: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.” The Antichrist is NOT going to be using “666” tattoos. It takes wisdom and understanding to figure out that the Antichrist’s number is 666, because His mark is a leopard’s spot, not 666 (Revelation 13:2). Rather, the number of his name is 666 (Revelation 13:18). If Israel cannot figure this out, they need to ask God for wisdom, and God will give them the understanding they need.

Reading Proverbs, we see two women competing for Israel. Wisdom is the woman they need to follow. “She is more precious than rubies” (Proverbs 3:15). “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her” (Proverbs 3:18). By contrast, “the foolish woman” (Proverbs 9:13) tries to lead Israel astray. She is a “a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart” (Proverbs 7:10). She catches Israel with her religious system. She says, “I have peace offerings with me; this day have I payed my vows” (Proverbs 7:14). “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him” (Proverbs 7:21). Revelation 17:5 reveals her as the Antichrist’s religious system: “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots.” The picture in Proverbs shows that wisdom may be found, but it must be sought out.

By contrast, Satan’s woman will seek Israel out to destroy her. Thus, we have the call in 1:5 to ask wisdom from God. Hebrews 11:6 says that God “is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” Therefore, they are to seek wisdom. The way God gives wisdom is through His Word. So, the little flock needs to be turning the

pages of scripture that relate to their program, especially Proverbs – Song of Solomon and Hebrews – Revelation.

God gives wisdom “to all men liberally,” but they must ask for wisdom “in faith, nothing wavering” (1:6). The reason is because God only gives wisdom to believers (Matthew 13:10-12; I Corinthians 2:9). Therefore, unbelievers could ask, until they are blue in the face, for God to give them wisdom, and God will never speak to them, e.g., I Samuel 28:6.

The Bible is “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). If Israel is just going through the motions without faith in God when they read scripture, they will be tricked by the foolish woman, because she (Babylon) will use scripture to say that the Antichrist is actually the true Christ. Apostate Israel will then take the mark of the beast and be lost forever. However, if they have faith in God and believe what God is saying to them, their faith will give them the true interpretation of scripture, and God will liberally give them wisdom so that they see who the Antichrist really is, and they will oppose him at all costs. But, if they lack faith in God, they will be “driven with the wind and tossed” (1:6).

Paul says that Satan’s ministers “lie in wait to deceive” so that believers are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14). Also, Revelation 17:1 says that Babylon sits “upon many waters,” and Revelation 13:1 says that the beast (the Antichrist) rises up out of the sea. Therefore, stormy waters is a type of the tribulation period (also see Matthew 8:24-26 and 14:24), which makes James’ analogy, in 1:6, appropriate. Thus, if Israel puts their trust in what men in the tribulation period say that the Bible says, Satan will devour them through the Babylonian religious system. The way to avoid this is by simply reading God’s Word rightly divided and believing what it says, rather than twisting it to satisfy the lusts of the flesh, as religion does. This is how they are to ask of wisdom from God.

Today, the Mormons love to use James 1:5 to tell Christians that they need to pray to God to see if what the Book of Mormon says is true. If they get a good feeling in their prayer, then they should become Mormon. This works well, today, because almost all people base their religious beliefs on their own subjective feeling, rather than on the Word of God. So, if they have a good feeling about the Mormon missionaries, they will probably have a good feeling in prayer. Those, praying this prayer, already have a good feeling about Mormonism, based upon how nice the missionaries have been to them, or else they would not pray this prayer. Therefore, they will accept Mormonism because of the good feeling they have, and they will reject the Word of God. In doing so, they believe they are following the Word of God, because they supposedly followed James 1:5. That is how Satan deceives people into following his lie program. Thus, they have been seduced by Satanic spirits into believing “doctrines of devils” (I Timothy 4:1), and Satan twisted the word of God to get them to do it.

Wisdom does not come from an inner impression. If it did, the little flock would be duped into believing apostate Israel’s doctrine in the tribulation period, because

apostate Israel will be doing “many wonderful works” in the name of the Christ (Matthew 7:22-23). For the tribulation saints, they will find wisdom from God by asking Him for it in the pages of His word. Then, because they sought wisdom by faith, God will give wisdom to them liberally by giving them the ears to hear “what the Spirit saith unto the churches” through His Word (Revelation 2:7). They will then have the wisdom to recognize the number of the beast and not follow him (Revelation 13:18).

1:7 “THAT man,” of this verse, is the man, who “is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed” (1:6). He believes in God, but he has not put his faith in God, because he wants the things of this world. So, he may ask of God for wisdom, but he does so by going to the Jewish religious system. This man, because of his lack of faith in God and His word, will not receive any wisdom from God, and he will go right into the pit of the lake of fire, as he will follow the religious crowd in worshipping the image of the beast and taking his mark, not even realizing that, in doing so, he just sold his soul to the devil.

We find similarities in today’s dispensation of grace. If you want to live godly, you will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Since most Christians are not willing to suffer for Christ, they, instead, seek after the things of this world and find a “Christian” religious system that will preach health and wealth to them today, so that they still appear “spiritual.” Since they seek the things of this world, God does not give them wisdom, which is why they call believers “heretics, cult followers, blasphemers, and nut cases” for taking God at His word by rightly dividing the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), when it is these surface-level Christians, who are the real heretics.

1:8 “A double minded man,” then, is your typical Christian today and your typical apostate Jew in the tribulation period. He wants the things of God, but not enough to give up the things of man. He has the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16), but he uses his corrupt mind (II Timothy 3:8). Therefore, he is double minded. Such a man is “unstable in all his ways,” because God’s ways are not the ways of man (Isaiah 55:8-9), and such a man is trying to follow both. So, he APPEARS to follow God’s ways in the sight of man, but he is really following his own ways. That is why he is unstable. He is not “like a tree planted by the rivers of water” (Psalm 1:3), but he is “like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed” (1:6), because he has no stability or root in the word of God.

1:9-10 Jesus said “that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23). The reason is because the little flock, in the tribulation period, is to “sell that ye have” (Luke 12:33). The reason is because, once the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period start, the little flock will lose all of their economic goods anyway, because they will not be able to buy or sell, since they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Also, “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17) during the tribulation period. Therefore, they might as well sell everything they have now and use the funds to help build up the kingdom, rather than working at a job (Acts 2:42-47).

Now, that we know the context, we can understand what James 1:9-10 means. First, we see that James is talking to believers, because he says, “let the BROTHER of low degree rejoice” (1:9). So, if you are poor and you join the little flock, you can rejoice because the richer guys are helping you out, and you have been exalted, both physically and spiritually. If you are rich and you join the little flock, you can rejoice that you are giving up your material riches. Why? Because, if you want to keep your riches, you will have to take the mark of the beast, which results in ending up in the lake of fire. Therefore, you can rejoice in that you can trade your material, temporal goods, for eternal, spiritual goods (Matthew 6:19-21).

That is why Jesus said that, with man, it is impossible (Matthew 19:26) “for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). So, the rich should rejoice “that he is made low,” because it means eternal life for him in the kingdom. Sure, it is hard to give up riches, but his riches would pass away anyway at Jesus’ second coming if he exchanged his soul for his riches (Matthew 16:26). So, why not give up the riches, gain eternal life, and then get an hundredfold (Matthew 19:29) more riches in the end when God sets up His kingdom on earth? Job is a picture of this, as he lost everything that he had, except for his heretic wife, and then got double riches in the end (Job 42:12).

Note that 1:10 says that the rich, “he shall pass away.” If you are rich at Jesus’ second coming, it means that you took the mark of the beast. Therefore, you will pass away. That is why Jesus said, “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24). Both are impossible. Therefore, the rich should rejoice that he gave up his riches when he became a believer, because it means that he can now have eternal life in God’s kingdom. All of this, of course, applies to Israel in the tribulation period, because James is writing to Israel (1:1). For us today in the dispensation of grace, God lets us use wisdom to determine how to spend money, because we “are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6:14).

The simple principle for the little flock to learn is “to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

1:11 God uses the illustration of sun and grass to show what the Antichrist and apostate Israel are like in the tribulation period. The Antichrist comes to power, and Israel thinks it is great, just like the grass loves the warmth of the sun when it first comes up. But, eventually, too much sun causes the grass to die, just like the Antichrist’s rule without God in their lives will cause “the rich man [in apostate Israel] to fade away in his ways” (1:11). “The Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2), the Lord Jesus Christ, will come and then consume them with His burning heat (Revelation 20:9; Hebrews 12:29).

Note that the rich man is in “HIS ways.” He is not in the ways of God, which is the way of faith in God’s Word. Therefore, he withers away. The warning, then, is for Israel to realize that the Antichrist is of Satan, not of God, and joining his program may bring them temporary riches, but it will end in certain death in the lake of

fire. By the way, this same warning is given in Isaiah 40:6-8. They are told, there, that man's ways will wither and fade, "but the word of our God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). Therefore, Israel needs to trust in God's word to them in the tribulation period, rather than trusting in uncertain riches.

1:12 Matthew 24:13 says that "he that shall endure unto the end [of the tribulation period], the same shall be saved." What does he have to endure? James 1:12 gives the answer: he has to endure temptation. The temptation is to trust in the things of the world, rather than in the things of God. The Antichrist and apostate Israel will first offer riches to Israel and then threaten to kill them for not worshipping the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). If they endure, God will give them eternal life. Note also that the only other time in scripture where "crown of life" is mentioned is in Revelation 2:10, and the crown of life there is also related to enduring temptation.

1:13-14 Genesis 22:1 says "that God did tempt Abraham." Yet, 1:13 says that God does not tempt any man. So, is this a contradiction in your Bible? No. The key is in the words "with evil" in 1:13. God may tempt man by trying his faith, as He does with the temptation mentioned in 1:12, but God never tempts man with evil. Therefore, He can sit as a refiner to purify the little flock with the trials of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:3), but He does not tempt the little flock to do some evil thing. The Mosaic law is an example. God tried Israel with the 10 commandments to see if they would have faith in Him or not, but He did not hold evil in front of them to entice them to sin. Sin is a result of the "sin [nature] that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:20) that tempts me to sin. Since the temptation comes from the sin nature, which God does not have, "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (1:13).

What tempts or entices a man to sin is "his own lust" (1:14). I John 2:15-17 says that, the way to avoid being enticed by the world, is not to love the world. And, even if Israel does sin, provided they do not worship the image of the beast or take its mark, if they have faith in God's promises to them, they will receive those promises at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, although God tries Israel, they cannot blame God for their own sin. Each person makes his own choice to either have faith in God and receive eternal life or follow his own lusts and die in his sin. The point of these verses, then, is that there are no acceptable excuses for unbelieving Israel on judgment day.

1:15-16 If Israel decides to follow their own lusts, instead of having faith in God, that lust "bringeth forth sin" (1:15). In fact, Romans 14:23 says that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Without faith, that sin will lead to the sin of taking the mark of the beast, and they will die, spiritually speaking. Of course, that does not mean that all those, who do not take the mark of the beast, will have eternal life. Otherwise, there would be no point in the angel preaching "the everlasting gospel" to the whole world just before Jesus' second coming (Revelation 14:6-7). Rather, James is just saying that the trials of the tribulation period will make it clear, who are the believers and who are not, because the trying of faith will work patience (1:3) in the believers to endure unto the end of the tribulation period, while those

without faith will follow their own lusts, sin, and be lost forever. However, since taking the mark of the beast does mean eternal damnation for the soul, James warns his “beloved brethren” not to err by following lust, rather than following faith (1:16), because then they would lose their salvation.

1:17 The Antichrist will offer Israel all kinds of power and riches to align themselves with him. Israel has been waiting for their Messiah since Abraham (only because they did not believe Jesus was their Messiah). They have been waiting for the Christ to come and set up His kingdom on earth. Therefore, when the Antichrist declares himself to be the Christ and offers them gifts in his kingdom, it will be very tempting for Israel to take those gifts. James tells Israel, here, that those are evil gifts—not good gifts—because they do not come from the Father of lights (thus, they are “gifts” from the devil).

The way they know this is that there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” with God (1:17). God gave Israel the law, and God said “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law” (Matthew 5:18). That shows no variableness with God. Therefore, when the Antichrist takes away the daily sacrifices under the law (Daniel 9:27), speaks against God (Daniel 11:36), and sets up an image for man to worship (Daniel 12:11), Israel can clearly see that the Antichrist is evil, his gifts are evil, and they are to have no part with him. They should not believe the lies of the Antichrist that God has changed things a little with Israel because there “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (1:17) with God.

Also, when James says that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above” (1:17), he is specifically referring to the gift of wisdom from God’s Word. After all, in 1:5, he said that God “giveth” wisdom to all men who ask for it. John 17:17 says that God’s Word is truth. John 1:9 says that the Word is the true light. Psalm 119:105 says “Thy word is...a light unto my path.” Therefore, the gift from the “Father of lights” (1:17) is wisdom from His Word.

1:18 This verse talks about believing Israel being “a kind of firstfruits” (1:18). I Corinthians 15:23 says that Christ is “the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” The idea is that believers receive glorified, new bodies. Since the body of Christ will be in heavenly places, our bodies are more “celestial,” while Israel will receive more terrestrial bodies, since they will be on the earth (I Corinthians 15:40). Therefore, Christ received the first glorified earthly body, and saved Israel, at Christ’s coming, will be the next to receive it, making them “a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (1:18). Then, after the millennial reign, the Gentiles, siding with God in the final battle with Satan (Revelation 20:7-10), will receive their eternal bodies. We should also note Revelation 14:4, where we see that the 144,000 Jews sealed in the tribulation period (Revelation 7:4) are called “the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

Note also, from 1:18, that Israel is begotten of God “with the word of truth.” Jesus told Nicodemus that Israel must be “born again” in order to “see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). The way they are born again is by believing the word of truth, i.e.,

“the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 10:7), which is to “repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38).

1:19 Since Israel is begotten of God “with the word of truth” (1:18), Israel needs to be “swift to hear” (1:19) that word of truth. Ecclesiastes 5:1 tells them to “be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools” when they go “to the house of God.” For Israel in the tribulation period, they need to be “swift to hear” to determine if what is being said is the word of God to them for their dispensation or if they are hearing false doctrine.

They should also be “slow to speak [and] slow to wrath” (1:19). The Jews will finally rise to power when they make a seven-year covenant with the Antichrist (Daniel 9:27). Many will just follow whatever the Antichrist says. They will let “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” take over (I John 2:16). However, if they are “swift to hear,” they will understand that the doctrine of the Antichrist is not of the true Christ. If they are “slow to speak,” they will not immediately rise up and support the Antichrist’s rule and teachings. If they are “slow to wrath,” they will not persecute members of the little flock for believing God’s Word to them over the Antichrist’s word to them. So, we see, here, the 3 things Israel needs to do in order to believe the gospel of the kingdom and be born again, rather than joining the Antichrist’s program and being lost. This same command is stated, in a different way, in Psalm 1:1, where Israel is told not to: 1) Walk “in the counsel of the ungodly,” 2) Stand “in the way of sinners,” or 3) Sit “in the seat of the scornful.”

In Saul of Tarsus, we see the opposite. He knew the law, but he was not swift to hear the religious leaders when they went against the little flock of God. He was then quick to speak judgment against and quick to impart wrath to the little flock. That is the way of apostate Israel in the tribulation period that James is warning Israel about here.

1:20 Because James is talking about “the wrath of man” and not the wrath of God against sinners, Israel should be “slow to wrath” (1:19). The Antichrist, and those joined to him, will say that, in persecuting and killing members of the little flock, they are executing the judgment of God (John 16:2). But, if Israel is “swift to hear,” they will realize that the Antichrist brings “the wrath of man,” which is “not the righteousness of God” (1:20). Therefore, they should have no part of it.

Jesus warns the little flock that their own family members will turn them in to be killed by the Antichrist (Matthew 10:21). The warning, here, in James 1:20, is that God’s giving of righteousness to Israel is not accomplished by killing believing Israel. Instead, the righteousness of God comes by believing “the word of truth” (1:18), i.e., the gospel of the kingdom, being preached to them in the tribulation period by the little flock of Israel (Matthew 10:5-7).

1:21 “The wrath of man” (1:20), which is the Antichrist killing the little flock, is not “the righteousness of God” (1:20). God calls it “filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness” (1:21). Isaiah 64:6 says that man’s righteousness is “as filthy rags.”

Thus, the wrath of man, at the hands of the Antichrist, is “filthiness” (1:21). The word “superfluity” means an overabundance. Therefore, although the Antichrist and apostate Israel will claim to be serving God during the tribulation period, God says that their plan to kill all those not in agreement with them is an overabundance of naughtiness. What a contrast! God calls Israel to lay aside the filthiness of man’s religion. This means they will have to be meek. They will have to lay aside their pride and their desire to satisfy their flesh and receive the gospel so that their souls are saved. Note how 1:21 calls the Bible “the engrafted word.” This shows the effect of God’s word. When you believe it, it is “engrafted” to your soul so that it becomes a part of you.

1:22 If the little flock believes the word of God to them, it will become a part of them (1:21). They will then be “doers of the word” (1:22). For them, this means going to the cities of Israel during the tribulation period (Matthew 10:23) and preaching the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:5-7).

Note that doing the word is contrasted with hearing the word. Those, hearing the word, are not believers. Rather, they are the ones to whom the two witnesses and the little flock go, and they choose not to believe. We can liken these folks to those, who just go through the motions today by going to church. They can tell you stories about Jesus’ life, because they have heard them, but they do not believe. Therefore, they are not saved. However, they think they are saved because they hear the Bible every Sunday. Thus, they have deceived themselves, just like those in Israel, who hear the Bible during the tribulation period, but do not believe the gospel of the kingdom.

The ultimate example of those, hearing the word but not doing it, are those who follow the Antichrist. The Antichrist will be very religious, since he will destroy the sanctuary and build it again, apparently making it according to God’s Word this time (Daniel 9:26-27). (He may destroy the sanctuary and build it again in three days, as a mock fulfillment of John 2:19.) He will re-institute the sacrifices and sit in the temple as God (II Thessalonians 2:4). He also will use the Bible to deceive his followers into thinking that they are following God (Matthew 7:22-23), when they are really children of the devil (John 8:44).

1:23-24 The Mosaic law is like a spiritual mirror for Israel. Israel’s own righteousness is “as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). They are spiritually dead and deserving of hell. A person does not know that he is ugly unless he can see it himself. Even if someone tells him, he will not believe it, if he thinks he is pretty. He has to look in a mirror to see that he is ugly. That is what the law does spiritually for Israel in the tribulation period. It shows them that they are sinners in need of a Saviour (Romans 7:11-16). Therefore, they need God’s imputed righteousness. The little flock can then share the gospel of the kingdom with them so that they can get out of their ugly, spiritual condition. They, then, have faith in God’s word to them. That is why Romans 10:17 says, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” But, if they do not believe, they remain lost in their sins. Most people, when confronted with their depravity, will deny it. They, then, soon forget how ugly they are spiritually, much like a man, who looks in a

mirror, but then never looks in the mirror again. He “forgetteth what manner of man he was” (1:24). This is especially true for Israel in the tribulation period, because, due to the Antichrist’s rule, there are few, true, spiritual mirrors for them to look at. What they then do is they look for a mirror that will make them look good, and that mirror, in the tribulation period, is the false spiritual mirror of the religious system of the Antichrist. They then think that they are okay, because the spiritual mirror of religion makes the filthy look beautiful.

1:25 However, if Israel believes, then they will look into “the perfect law of liberty” for salvation. Romans 8:2 says that, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Once the lost sheep of the house of Israel realizes that their sin causes their death, they then look into the perfect law of liberty by believing the gospel of the kingdom. They are then judged by that law of liberty (2:12), going from sin and death to Spirit and life.

Therefore, when the spiritual mirror of God’s word is put in front of them and they look into it, it means that they recognize they will not have eternal life in God’s kingdom unless they trust in God to bring them into the kingdom and they recognize that this requires that they put themselves back under the law covenant that God made with Israel. Since the work of continuing in God’s law is required, they have to not only have initial faith in the gospel, but the believing remnant of Israel must also continue therein (1:25). By continuing therein in the word of God to them, they are “a doer of the work” and so God will reward them for their faith that is evidenced by their works (1:25). However, if they do not continue therein, they will forget their filthiness and will wallow in the filth of the Antichrist’s religion by worshipping the image of the beast and being eternally lost.

We should also note the new mirror that God has for us to look into as members of the body of Christ today. Once we believe the gospel of the grace of God, we are baptized by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:12-13) into Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:4-6). We then look at the Bible as good news, rather than bad news. Through His Word, God gives us “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 4:6). We then “with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18). In other words, saved members of the body of Christ, who believe God’s Word, look at the doctrine found in Paul’s epistles and that doctrine changes us into the image of Jesus Christ, as we behold His face in His Word.

Therefore, we are first disgusted by our own spiritual ugliness when we see ourselves in the mirror of God’s law. Then, God saves us by the gospel of grace, places us into Christ, and gradually changes us through believing sound doctrine, as we behold the face of Jesus Christ in the mirror of God’s Word rightly divided (II Timothy 2:15).

1:26-27 1:26 is not saying that saved people are silent people. After all, how can the little flock preach the gospel of the kingdom to Israel without speaking? 1:26 is

also not referring to making sure you do not offend people or get them mad at you, which is what most Christians will tell you it means.

When you rightly divide the word of truth, you can discern that bridling the tongue, in this context, means not judging apostate Israel and not trying to prove they are wrong. 3:1 says that they are not to be masters over unbelieving Israel. If they are, they “shall receive the greater condemnation.” This is what Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 7:1-2: “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

In the kingdom, believing Israel will be judging the whole world (Matthew 19:28; Luke 19:16-19; Psalm 2:7-9). However, before then, they are in vile bodies that still sin (Philippians 3:21). Therefore, they are not to judge apostate Israel to hell or, worse yet, get into some religious war of words with them. Rather, they are commissioned to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8). In other words, until believing Israel gets their new bodies in the kingdom, they are not in a position to judge apostate Israel. Rather, they are to help each other. Luke 12:33 shows Jesus’ command for them to sell what they have, and Acts 2:42-47 and 4:34-35 show them carrying out that command and distributing their assets to the members of the little flock, who have need.

When capital punishment for not worshipping the image of the beast is instituted by the false prophet halfway through the tribulation period (Revelation 13:15), Jesus says there will be brothers delivering up brothers, fathers delivering up children, and children delivering up parents to be put to death (Matthew 10:21). By delivering up their own family members to be killed, the surviving family will be widows and fatherless children (1:27).

If the little flock acts out of their own flesh, they will seek revenge against those widows and fatherless children, who put their own family members to death. But, this really gives them a unique opportunity to take care of the very people who put their spiritual brothers and sisters to death. If they “visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (1:27), they can share the gospel of the kingdom so that they may be saved. At the same time, the little flock will be obeying the Mosaic law, which obligates them to take care of widows and fatherless children (Deuteronomy 10:17-19, 14:29, and 24:19-21). Therefore, they will be showing these unbelievers “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father” (1:27).

By contrast, the vain religion of apostate Israel (1:26) will cause its followers to boast of how close they are to God because of all the great things they have done for God. We see apostate Israel doing this on judgment day (Matthew 7:22), and we see an example of this with the Pharisee’s speech in Luke 18:11-12. By contrast, a believer realizes he is a sinner. Therefore, he does not brag about himself because he knows his righteousness is filthy. The warning to Israel, then, is that, if a religious person uses his tongue to brag about himself, then that person does not have faith in the word of God to Israel, and they should not be believed.

The ultimate example of vain religion and an unbridled tongue for those in the tribulation period is the Antichrist. Daniel 7:8 calls the Antichrist a “little horn.” He is little in stature, but he rises to power because he has “a mouth speaking great things.” Daniel 11:21 says that he obtains “the kingdom by flatteries.” Then, once he obtains the kingdom, he opens “his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Revelation 13:6).

If Israel wants to see “pure religion and undefiled” (1:27), they need to look for works that proceed out of faith, not the braggadocios words of the Antichrist. Jesus said that “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:18). Therefore, the actions of believing Israel, in taking care of the fatherless and the widows, will show all the lost sheep of the house of Israel that the gospel that they preach is of God.

I do not think it is a coincidence that the word “unspotted” is used in 1:27. The Antichrist will be a leopard (Revelation 13:2; Jeremiah 5:6). The “mark” of the leopard is a spot. To be kept “unspotted,” then, means not to take the mark of the beast. Therefore, James is saying that faith in God’s promises to Israel will keep them from taking the mark of the beast, and it will show others not to take the mark of the beast, as well.

2 James warns believing Israel not to let the riches and power of apostate Israel and the powerlessness and poorness of believing Israel cause them to lose faith in God’s promises to them. First, they should not favor the rich in their own assemblies (vs. 1-5). Second, they should see the hypocrisy and corruptness of apostate Israel (vs. 6-11). Third, they should jettison apostate Israel’s laws and take hold of “the law of liberty” (v. 12), which is God’s justification program of faith, in God’s promises to Israel under the law covenant, plus works that stem from that faith (vs. 12-26). Then, believing Israel will endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13).

2:1-4 James is written to believing Israel in the tribulation period so that they may endure unto the end and be saved. As such, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is back up here, since we are back in Israel’s program now. Israel has favored-nation status over the Gentiles (Deuteronomy 7:6). Jesus told His disciples to go to cities of Israel to preach the gospel—not Gentile or even Samaritan cities (Matthew 10:5-6). Therefore, this passage is talking about having no respect of persons among **Jews**. They are still to respect the Jew above the Gentile.

Note that the rich man and the poor man have come to the little flock’s assembly (2:2). Also, the “respect of persons” is with regard to “the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2:1). It is not faith IN Christ, but the faith OF Christ. It is the faith OF Christ that brought Him to the cross to atone for the sins of the world. Israel is saved, during the tribulation period, by believing God’s promise of eternal life to

them, being water baptized, putting themselves under God's law covenant with them, and not taking the mark or worshipping the image of the beast.

The leaders of the little flock have the power of the Holy Ghost in them to either forgive sins or retain them (John 20:22-23). So, they have the power to say whether or not the faith OF our Lord Jesus Christ will atone for the sins of the people who come to their assembly. With that power, they are not to be a respecter of persons. Being a respecter of persons is a dangerous temptation, because: 1) They do not have food or water, so, they may treat the rich person nicely, hoping to get him to join the little flock and sell his goods to help them out, since ALL members of the little flock are commanded to "sell that ye have" (Luke 12:33), and 2) The rich man may influence the little flock to change their beliefs, even to the extent of taking the mark of the beast, if they want his money. So, the warning to the little flock is to allow the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ to atone for the sins of all Jews, who come into their assembly and have faith to believe the gospel, regardless if they are rich or poor.

Another danger is that the rich person may be part of apostate Israel, there to spy out what the little flock is doing. Remember that Hezekiah showed Babylon the temple's riches, and the result was that Babylon would take those riches away from Israel (II Kings 20:12-18). Similarly, if the little flock shows the spiritual riches of God to spies from apostate Israel, those spies may take those riches away by convincing members of the little flock to deny the faith, or have people persecuted or killed for their faith.

"The love of money is the root of all evil," causing the moneylovers to err from the faith (I Timothy 6:10). In mankind's history, this will be truest in Israel during the Great Tribulation, i.e., the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period. That is because the Antichrist will control the world economy at that time with the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17). Since apostate Israel made a seven-year covenant with the Antichrist to begin the tribulation period (Daniel 9:27), they will continue to do what the Antichrist wants them to do, in order to obtain material riches. II Peter 2:3 warns the little flock that "false prophets" among them (II Peter 2:1) will "make merchandise of" them. Jude 11 says that these false prophets "ran greedily...for reward." Revelation 3:17 says that the Laodiceans are "rich, and increased with goods." The reason for this is because their merchandise is the "souls of men" (Revelation 18:13).

In other words, the Antichrist will handsomely reward apostate Israel for turning in the believing remnant to be killed for not worshipping the image of the beast. That is why Mark 13:12 says that "the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death." Therefore, the primary reason the little flock should not have respect of persons with rich folks, who come into their assembly, is because the rich folks got rich in the trade of the souls of men. Therefore, they are there to get more members of the little flock to defect. If they do so, they will become "judges of evil thoughts" (2:4) by scorning members of the little flock to death (Psalm 1:1).

Therefore, there are many negative factors involved with being nicer to rich people in the assembly. Of course, we should be no respecter of persons in today's dispensation as well, but both the temptation to respect rich people over poor people and the consequences for doing so are far greater for the little flock during the tribulation period than they are us for us today.

2:5 In fact, if the little flock is going to be a respecter of persons, they should respect the poor over the rich! The story in Luke 16:19-31 of the rich man and Lazarus is a great example. The rich, in the tribulation period, are probably rich because they are part of apostate Israel that has aligned themselves with the Antichrist. God has "chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith" (2:5). They are poor in the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). That is why Jesus said that it is impossible for a rich man in the tribulation period to enter into the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24).

Remember what we saw in 1:10 that "the rich...is made low" in the tribulation period. And so, in the great tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period), those "rich in faith" are "the poor of this world" (2:5). That does not necessarily apply today, although it is still usually the case, since those rich in faith will not go after the things of this world. So, the little flock should not favor the rich, because, doing so, means favoring the things of this world over having faith in God.

2:6-7 We can see that James' warning to the little flock is appropriate, because they are favoring the rich over the poor. We can also see that, in fact, these instructions do pertain to the great tribulation, because James says that "rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats" (2:6). Jesus told the little flock that they would be brought before kings as part of their persecution (Mark 13:9). In fact, that is how the gospel of the kingdom will "be preached in all the world" (Matthew 24:14), even though they "shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Matthew 10:23). They will be brought before councils, rulers, and kings, and the Holy Ghost will speak the gospel through them so that the gospel is published among all nations, even though the believing remnant never finishes going to all of Israel with the gospel (Mark 13:9-11). The point to James' readers, though, is to preach the gospel and show God's love to all Jews, who come to their assembly, not just the rich ones. And, by not giving preferential treatment to the rich, the little flock remains "unspotted from the world" (1:27).

Why would they favor the rich when the rich are the ones persecuting them? The rich are the Jewish religious leaders of apostate Israel. The way they "blaspheme that worthy name" (2:7) is that they do their religion in the name of God. They teach their own doctrine, instead of God's doctrine; they do miracles in God's name; and they persecute and kill the believing remnant of Israel, all in God's name. Thus, they say they represent the Lord, and they lead people astray, making them think they are following God, when they are really following Satan. The

people led astray are those who think they are doing God service by turning members of the little flock over to the authorities to be killed (John 16:2). Thus, they blaspheme God's name by doing the works of the devil in the name of the Lord. The great example of this is in Matthew 7:22-23, which says they do all these things in the Lord's name, but the Lord says to them on judgment day, "I never knew you: depart from me."

Note also, from 2:7, that the difference between apostate Israel and believing Israel is that apostate Israel calls on the name of the Lord and blasphemes Him, while believing Israel is called by God by the name of the Lord. In fact, Revelation 3:12 specifically says that Israel has God's name written on them.

2:8 Apostate Israel will claim that they are following God's law. That is why James makes the distinction, here, that "the royal law according to the scripture" is to "love thy neighbour as thyself" (2:8). This law is found in Leviticus 19:18, and Jesus says, in Matthew 22:37-40, that all of the law and the prophets are fulfilled by loving God and loving their neighbours as themselves. Therefore, the real "royal" law is not the Antichrist's law, but it is God's law found in His Word.

By killing and persecuting believing Israel, apostate Israel is breaking the law of Moses. They may come up with some fancy excuse that they are justified in killing believing Jews. That is why James shows that, whatever their excuses may be, they are guilty of breaking the law, by killing the very people that the law says they are to love. Remember "pure religion and undefiled before God...is...to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction" (1:27). It is not to use their tongue to condemn believers to death (1:26).

2:9 So, then, why is believing Israel disobeying God's royal law by respecting rich Jews over poor Jews? They should "judge righteous judgment," not looking on the outward appearance (John 7:24), but showing God's love to the poor so that they might be saved.

2:10-11 2:10 is not saying that, if you break the law in one point, you have broken the law in all points. In other words, by stealing, you have not also committed adultery, murder, etc. The point is that, by breaking the law in one point, you are worthy of punishment under the law. This means that, if you commit one sin in your life, which all have done (Romans 3:23), then you receive death (Romans 6:23). That is why every resurrected soul at the Great White Throne Judgment will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-14). The point of bringing this up is to show believing Israel that all of the Jewish religious leaders will be thrown into the lake of fire unless they have faith in God's promises to Israel over the Antichrist's promises to them. So, apostate Israel kills believers, and they justify it with their excuses. Then, they show that they are really good people because they obey God's law (as they define it).

However, 2:11 says that the law says, "Do not kill." By killing, they have "become a transgressor of the law" (2:11), even if they do not commit adultery and obey the other aspects of the law. And, they have also committed adultery by committing

spiritual fornication with “Babylon the great, the mother of harlots” (Revelation 17:1-5). Remember that the law is a heart issue. If they just hate someone, they are guilty of killing him in their hearts (Matthew 5:21-22). This means that, based on their own merits, not a single person is righteous (Romans 3:9-12).

James’ point is that believing Israel should have no part with apostate Israel, because apostate Israel has broken the law. As such, they are all bound for the lake of fire, and this is clearly evident to all people because they have broken God’s commandment of: “Do not kill.” So, regardless of what apostate Israel says about how good they are, the truth is that they are going to hell. Therefore, when apostate Israel comes into their midst, the little flock should not even give them an opportunity to speak, even though they have material riches and are important people to the religious world (2:1-4).

2:12 The good news is that those, who have faith in God’s promises to Israel, will be “judged by the law of liberty” (2:12), rather than by the law of Moses. Otherwise, even believers would go to hell. “The law of liberty” was mentioned in 1:25, and it refers to being liberated by the Spirit from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2) by believing the gospel of the kingdom and the sound doctrine associated with it. Believing Israel will be judged by their faith, then, rather than by the law. II Corinthians 3:15-16 says that apostate Israel has the vail of the law “upon their heart,” and, once they “turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” That is what is going on with believing Israel. They compared themselves with the law and saw their depravity (1:23-24). Therefore, they looked “into the perfect law of liberty” (1:25) by believing the gospel of the kingdom so that they may have eternal life. Therefore, they should speak and do kingdom doctrine, rather than speaking and not doing the commandments of men, like apostate Israel will do. Apostate Israel is all about cloaking their evil deeds in religiosity so that they look good to others. However, those, who believe God and His Word, see through this disguise and are called to speak the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel so that they may also see through the Antichrist’s cloak of religion and be saved.

2:13 From now through the end of the chapter, James will show that “the law of liberty” is faith plus works. Believing Israel is not saved without works. One of those works is forgiveness. Apostate Israel persecutes and kills believing Israel. Since they have not shown mercy in their judgment, God will not show them mercy when He judges them either. This work of forgiveness applies to believing Israel as well, because Jesus told believing Israel, “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:15).

This gives us a clear understanding of Matthew 7:1-2, which says, “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” This is not saying that you have to allow homosexuals to express their feelings for each other, or else God will condemn you for not loving them. Rather, it is saying that, during the tribulation period, Israel is not in a position to judge people. They will not be in the judgment position until Jesus establishes God’s eternal kingdom on earth (Matthew 19:28). Until then, their job is to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the

lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10:6-8). This is important to understand because apostate Israel will be killing people for, supposedly, disobeying God. They will think that they are doing God service in killing those, who do not worship the image of the beast (John 16:2). Therefore, the people, who appear to be serving God, will really be judged by God for showing no mercy, during the time God has set aside for Israel to be saved (Romans 11:26).

2:14 The question is asked, here, can faith alone save a man? 2:15-23 will give examples, leading to the answer in 2:24 of “no.” A man is justified by faith plus works, and not by faith alone (2:24). Today, people change this around because Romans 3:28 says that faith alone does save a man. This is not a contradiction, but rather it is a difference in dispensations. In today’s dispensation, faith alone does save a man (Romans 3:28). However, in Israel’s dispensation during the tribulation period, faith plus works are required for salvation (2:24). So, when a man has faith without works, there is no profit to that man because he is not saved. James is addressing those in the assembly of the little flock to let them know that they must work during the tribulation period, not only so that others in Israel will be saved, but also so that they themselves do not lose their salvation.

Note that 2:14 says, “though a man SAY he hath faith.” That is what apostate Israel will say. They will prophesy in God’s name, cast out devils in God’s name, and do many wonderful works in God’s name, but Jesus will say, “I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:22-23). They will be rich in the things of this world and claim Abraham as their father (Luke 16:22-24), but Jesus will say, “Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:44). They will promise liberty to believing Israel, but will turn them away from believing the gospel and trusting in God to save them (II Peter 2:18-22). Therefore, this verse is still focused upon apostate Israel, who claims to trust God, when they really have no faith and will go to the lake of fire instead.

2:15-26 Summary Understanding what James is saying is difficult because the Christian religion has so perverted these verses to try to make them applicable to today that it is hard to get the vain imaginations of religion out of your head to understand God’s Word. There are variations of what Christianity says that these verses mean, based on what they want them to mean. So, it gets confusing. However, if we set aside our preconceived notions, we can let the words mean what they say, and the interpretation becomes clear.

In 2:14, James says that faith alone cannot save Israel in the tribulation period. They must have faith plus works. In 2:15-16, he gives an example of the uselessness of faith without works. Then, in 2:18-19, he gives an example of the uselessness of works without faith, clarifying that the faith that is needed is in God’s promises to Israel, not just faith that God actually exists. Then, in 2:21-23, James gives the example of Abraham, which is faith in God’s promises to Israel plus the works that come out of that faith. This leads to the conclusion, in 2:24, that justification for Israel comes by faith in God’s promises plus works, as it did for Abraham.

Note, in John 8:39, that Jesus says, “If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” That is the same thing that James is saying. Jews, with faith in God’s promises to Israel, are Abraham’s children, and they will do the works, coming out of that faith, that justify them in Israel’s program.

2:15-16 Now, James gives an example to illustrate why works must be coupled with faith in order for a person to be saved. The example is of a brother, who does not have clothing or food. Just telling them to have clothes and food does not actually give them clothes and food. Giving them clothing and food is the only way to help. This is a great example for the little flock, because there will be many situations where believers do not have clothing and food because they cannot buy or sell because they have not taken the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Just the idea of feeding someone is called “dead,” here, when you do not actually feed him, because there are no results stemming from the idea.

Apostate Israel brings forth evil fruit in the tribulation period (Matthew 7:15-20). This evil fruit is them putting on a front that they are helping people and represent God, as shown by the response of “depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled” (2:16). Believing Israel needs to produce good fruit, which they do when they abide in the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:1-7). The gospel of the kingdom includes repentance (Matthew 3:2, 4:17, and Acts 2:38), which means that they change their mind about trusting in their own righteousness and they trust in God’s imputed righteousness instead, as shown in Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18:9-14. If they trust in God’s imputed righteousness, then they cease from their own works (Hebrews 4:10), abide in Christ, and have the works of faith, which, in this example, means actually feeding the little flock. If they do not have works of faith, it means they are not abiding in Christ, which means they are working themselves, which is what apostate Israel does in joining themselves to the Antichrist in the tribulation period.

2:17 If a man has faith in God in the tribulation period but he does not abide in Christ, his faith does not do the rest of Israel any good. It is dead, and so is that man. Jesus gives an illustration of this in Matthew 25:14-30 with the parable of the talents. The man with one talent does nothing with it. The result is that he is cast “into outer darkness” (Matthew 25:30). Similarly, in Matthew 25:1-13, the foolish do not get into the marriage feast. The point is that believing Israel is “judged by the law of liberty” (2:12), which is faith in God and the works that come out of that faith. Without the works, faith is alone without any life. Therefore, they are dead.

In the tribulation period, there are many religious people in Israel. They look good, but they are not saved. Jesus says, “by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matthew 7:20), because “a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:18). The way they bring forth good fruit is to abide in Jesus (John 15:4), because Jesus is the true vine (John 15:1). So, if they abide in God’s Word to them, they are in the true vine, they bring forth good fruit, and they enter the kingdom. If they abide in apostate Israel’s religious system, they are “cast forth as a branch” from the true vine; they wither; and then they are

cast into the lake of fire (John 15:6). Only by believing God's promise to them and putting themselves under the law covenant do they have the works to stay in the true vine in order to be saved.

2:18 This verse is the conclusion of 2:14-17. "A man" means that, based upon the preceding example, a man would be accurate in making this conclusion. Because "faith without works is dead" (2:20), a person cannot show his faith without works. A believer can only show his faith by his works.

We must be very careful to note that these works are the works of faith, not the works of the law, because, "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16).

Apostate Israel will try to make the little flock of Israel think that their works prove that they are saved. The little flock's "works" are to preach the gospel, heal the sick, love each other, and starve. The works of apostate Israel are signs and wonders, economic prosperity, and ruling the world. To those judging by the outward appearance, apostate Israel's works will appear to be of God, while the little flock's works will appear to be of Satan. That is why Jesus told His disciples to judge righteous judgment and not judge by the outward appearance (John 7:24). Jesus said that "many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:5). However, a Jew, who compares the works with God's Word, will not be deceived.

2:19 Apostate Israel will do "many wonderful works" in the Lord's name (Matthew 7:22), but the Lord says that they are not saved and they work iniquity (Matthew 7:23). Sure, they believe that "there is one God," but "the devils also believe, and tremble" (2:19), showing that the devils believe in God and fear God, and they are still not saved. So then, why would apostate Israel be saved by just having faith that there is a God? Salvation, at this time, comes by believing the gospel of the kingdom and having works that stem from that faith, rather than having works of the flesh that unbelievers mistake for being works of faith.

Today, we also see works of the flesh being mistaken for works for faith. For example, if I start a church and thousands of people start coming, Christianity says that God is blessing me. But, if I begin pastoring a church and people start leaving, Christianity says I must have sin in my life. In other words, Christianity equates prosperity with righteousness. But, God's Word says, "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Furthermore, in John 6, Jesus preaches a message that reduces His audience from about 5,000 (John 6:10) to 12 (John 6:66-67). Therefore, the Bible presents a different view of God blessing a person than the view presented by Christianity.

Therefore, just because apostate Israel uses God's name in the tribulation period does not mean that they are of God. Their works must back up their faith, and the works have to be works that are in line with faith, rather than works that are in line with material prosperity. As we will see, in 2:21-25, the works of faith actually go contrary to the works of the law.

2:20 Now, James goes back to addressing the unsaved of Israel, who are not part of apostate Israel, but they still think that faith alone will save them. This person is vain or empty because faith alone, in Israel's program, means not abiding in Christ. Therefore, they are not part of the true vine (John 15:1-6).

2:21 In Genesis 15:6, Abraham was justified by faith alone, as a Gentile. He was the first one justified by faith alone. This makes him "our father" (Romans 4:1) today in the dispensation of grace. He is given the promise of his seed being as the stars in heaven (Genesis 15:5), because the body of Christ is "blessed...with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). Then, in Genesis 17:23-26, Abraham became the first Jew, when he was circumcised. Then, in Genesis 22, Abraham offered Isaac upon the altar, and he was "justified by works" as a Jew. This makes him "our father" (2:21) to all the saved in Israel's program. He is given the promise that his seed will be "as the sand which is upon the sea shore (Genesis 22:17), because Israel inherits God's kingdom on earth (Matthew 5:5). This makes Abraham "the father of us all [who are saved]" (Romans 4:16). In the context of 2:21, however, Abraham was not saved in Israel's program by faith alone, but he needed works, coming out of that faith, to be saved as a Jew in Israel's program.

We should also note that justification, in Israel's program, is always by faith plus works. The way we know this is that the first Jew ever justified was Abraham, and 2:21 says it was by faith plus works. Then, in 2:24, James says that justification is still by faith plus works in the tribulation period, showing that justification is always by faith plus works, in Israel's program, regardless of the phase it is in.

2:22 Abraham was not justified by works alone, but he also had faith in God's promises to him, as Genesis 15:6 says. Therefore, faith in God's promises came first. Then, his works, coming from that faith, worked together to make him perfect, worthy of eternal life in God's eternal kingdom on earth.

In Matthew 5:20, Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." He concluded his argument by saying, "Be ye therefore perfect" (Matthew 5:48). How is the Jew perfect so that he enters the kingdom of heaven? 2:22 gives the answer. He is to have faith in God's promises to him and then have works, stemming from that faith, whereby "faith wrought with his works" makes his faith perfect (2:22), and he can enter the kingdom of heaven.

By contrast, in the dispensation of grace today, we are justified by faith alone (Romans 3:28). Therefore, we receive our justification the moment we believe (Romans 5:9-11). Since Israel's justification is predicated on them having works that stem from their faith, they must wait until Jesus' second coming before they are justified (Acts 3:19-21).

The reason for this difference is because God has treated Jew and Gentile differently. When Gentiles were in unbelief of God at the Tower of Babel in Genesis

11, God gave them over to reprobate minds (Romans 1:28). This means they were left in spiritual darkness (Acts 17:27). That is the state that the Gentiles were in when God started the dispensation of grace. Therefore, all God had to do was shine “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” on the Gentiles (II Corinthians 4:4), they believed, and God gave them eternal life.

However, with the Jews, God called Abram and made of him a great nation, which is Israel (Genesis 12:1-2). Israel rebelled against God, and God could have poured out His fury upon them at that time, as He did upon the Gentiles at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11. However, God did not do that this time, in order that His name would not be polluted among the Gentiles (Ezekiel 20:8-9). “Wherefore,” He brought them “out of the land of Egypt..., and...gave them [His] statutes” (Ezekiel 20:10-11).

This gave the Jews an extra layer of law that the Gentiles did not have (Romans 3:1-2). This extra law, known as the Mosaic law, made them God’s servants (Leviticus 25:55) to be treated like children (“Children of Israel” appears 604 times in the Bible.) until their faith is made perfect (Galatians 3:23-25). We have already seen that this perfect faith involves works stemming from that faith. Therefore, because they are children, they must have works that go along with their faith in order to be saved.

2:23 As a Gentile, “Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness” (2:23). That is what Genesis 15:6 says, and that is what Paul quotes in Romans 4:3 to show that, AS A GENTILE, he was justified by faith alone without works (Romans 4:2). However, as James has already mentioned, Abraham was also “justified by works” (2:21). AS A JEW, the work of offering Isaac on the altar wrought with his faith to make his faith perfect (2:21-22). Therefore, from the standpoint of a Gentile, he “believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6)—case closed. However, from the standpoint of a Jew, since Jews need works to go along with that faith in order to be righteous, due to the extra layer of law they have, Abraham’s righteousness as a Jew was not granted until he “offered Isaac his son upon the altar” (2:21).

Abraham is then called “the Friend of God,” which is not found in Genesis. It is found in II Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8. The context of both references is that God has separated Israel from the nations because Abraham is His friend. The reason that God called Abraham His friend is that he kept God’s commandment to him. Jesus told His disciples that “ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15:14). Going from being God’s servant to being God’s friend means that God the Father reveals His plans to you (John 15:15). He did that with Abraham in telling him about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:7), and He does that with the little flock in the tribulation period in telling them about the destruction of spiritual Sodom and Gomorrah—called “Mystery, Babylon” in Revelation 17:5. This also explains why God hides His wisdom, that is found in His Word, from unbelievers (Matthew 13:11). Today, in the dispensation of grace, believers are given the Holy Spirit to teach them the things of God (I Corinthians 2:10-13), and unbelievers cannot understand the wisdom of God

without the Holy Spirit living inside them because the things of God “are spiritually discerned” (I Corinthians 2:14).

The term “friend” is a transitional term for Israel. They are called God’s servants (Leviticus 25:55), and a servant is treated like a child, in that they have no inheritance (Galatians 4:1). When Israel has faith plus the works of faith, they are called God’s friends (III John 14), as Abraham was here. They have not received the adoption as sons of God, because they do not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-21). Therefore, they are not sons of God until God’s kingdom comes to earth (Revelation 21:5-7). However, they are more than servants, because they believed God and have the works of faith. Therefore, they are called friends of God until Jesus’ second coming. In the dispensation of grace, because we have already received the atonement (Romans 5:11), we skip this transitional phase of friends, going right from being servants to being sons of God (Galatians 4:5-7).

The reason we skip the transitional phase of friends today is because we were never given the Mosaic law. All people are given the law of the conscience written on their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). Regardless of dispensation, when someone believes the gospel, God purges his “conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). However, Israel still has the Mosaic law to follow. Therefore, their faith is not yet perfect, as ours is today, which is why we receive the atonement now (Romans 5:11), but Israel does not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20).

2:24 Christians, who do not rightly divide the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15), believe that there is only one gospel in the entire Bible. If they say it is faith alone, they have to change James 2:21,24, and 25. If they say it is faith plus works, they have to change Romans 3:28. Either way, they are changing the truth of God’s word into a lie. The truth is that justification, in the prophecy program, is by faith plus works, and justification, in the mystery program, is by faith alone. We know this to be true because the Bible says it is true.

Romans 3:28 says, “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” James 2:24 says, “by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” The same word—“justified”—is used in both verses. So, you cannot say, “Well, James 2:24 is saying that works prove a man’s justification,” or “Romans 3:28 leaves out the works part. You have to go back to Romans 2:6-10 to see that.” Either argument is NOT what the verses say.

You also cannot say that the justification, referred to in 2:24, is being justified in the sight of man, because: 1) There were no men around to see Abraham sacrifice Isaac on the altar (2:21), and 2) Men persecute godly living (II Timothy 3:12), and they take pleasure in those who do ungodly works (Romans 1:28-32). Plus, intending to kill your own son, as with Abraham, is ungodly in man’s eyes, so Abraham would not be justified by man for killing his son. Besides, the only men, who seem to be around, in the context of 2:24, are apostate men (2:18) and vain men (2:20). This means that, even if this justification is talking about being

justified in the eyes of man, that justification would be incorrect. For example, man justified Michael Jackson by more than 1 million people trying to get a ticket to his funeral. That did not make Michael Jackson a righteous man. By contrast, nearly all godly people are so far out of the limelight that only their local churches know of their passing. This does not make them ungodly men.

If you take any other view than believing that 2:24 says that GOD justifies a man by faith plus works, you have to change the truth of God's word into a lie to support that view. The ONLY correct explanation of how both Romans 3:28 and James 2:24 can be true without changing what they say is to believe that they are true at different times. James 1:1 says that the book of James is written to scattered Israel, which means that 2:24 is true in Israel's prophecy program, which we are not in at this time. Romans 11:13 says that Paul is the apostle of the Gentiles, which means that Romans 3:28 is true during the mystery program, which is the time period in which we currently live.

Therefore, we must conclude that James 2:24 tells how Israel is justified during the tribulation period, and Romans 3:28 tells how people are justified, who live from Acts 9 to the rapture of the body of Christ. Any other conclusion is from Satan, since it is a lie, and Satan is the father of the lie (John 8:44). Justification for Israel in the tribulation period MUST be by faith plus works, because that is what this verse says. Period.

We must note that the works, in this verse, are works of faith, and not works of the law. This must be the case because Galatians 2:16 mentions the "works of the law" 3 times, concluding that, "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." We can also determine that the works in James 2 are works of faith by looking at the 2 examples we have been given.

The first example is that Abraham was "justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar" (2:21). The law says, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), and the penalty for breaking this law is death (Exodus 21:12). However, from God's perspective, Abraham did not break that commandment, because God would have raised him from the dead (Hebrews 11:19), which transforms this from being an evil deed worthy of death to being a work of faith worthy of life.

The same can be said of the second example, which is Rahab being "justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way" (2:25). The king of Jericho specifically commanded Rahab to turn over the spies from Israel to be killed. Instead, Rahab hid the men and then lied, saying that the men fled and she did not know where they had gone (Joshua 2:3-6). The law says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour" (Exodus 20:16), which she did. The penalty for being a false witness is to receive the punishment of the one you are falsely witnessing about (Deuteronomy 19:16-19), which, in this case, would be death. However, from God's perspective, Rahab did not break this commandment, because her spiritual king was God, not the king of Jericho. She would have been going against God's commandment for her to bless Israel if she did not bear false witness (Genesis 12:3). This transforms her false

witness from being an evil deed worthy of death to being a work of faith worthy of life.

Thus, you can see that the works, by which Israel are justified, are works of faith. Therefore, they do not have to obey the Mosaic law in order to maintain their salvation, which is good, because “there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:3 and 53:3), and this includes believing Jews in the tribulation period. In fact, David was an adulterer (II Samuel 11:2-4) and a murderer (II Samuel 11:16-17) after he had faith in God, and David proclaimed, “blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity” (Psalm 32:1-2). This shows that justification by faith plus works for Israel does not mean obeying the Mosaic law. Rather, it means having works that come forth from the faith they have in God to bring them into the kingdom.

2:25 Rahab was a Gentile, but she was a Gentile living in Israel’s program. Therefore, she is justified by faith plus works, as well. However, God has told the Gentiles something different than He told the Jews in Israel’s program. God told the Jews to put themselves under the law covenant (Exodus 19:5-6) and have faith in God to bring them into the land. So, Israel, in the prophecy program, is saved by believing God’s promise of eternal life in the land to them and working the deeds of the law in response to that.

The Gentiles, in the prophecy program, were told to bless Israel (Genesis 12:3). So, a Gentile, in the prophecy program, is blessed by believing God’s promise to them of eternal life on earth under Israel’s leadership and working the deeds of blessing Israel right now in order to be justified. Rahab, the harlot, is a picture of this. She had faith in what God had told the Gentiles, and then she was justified by the work of blessing Israel by receiving the messengers from Israel and helping them out, i.e., blessing them.

Note the judgment of the Gentiles in Israel’s program, found in Matthew 25:31-46, centers around them being justified or not justified by how they treat Israel. The Gentiles, who inherit the kingdom, help the little flock of Israel (Matthew 25:34-40). The Gentiles, who go into everlasting punishment, do not help out the little flock (Matthew 25:41-46). Therefore, both Jews and Gentiles, IN ISRAEL’S PROGRAM, are justified by faith plus works, but the faith and works differ, depending upon if a person is a Jew or a Gentile, because of the favored-nation status that God gave Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6). Either way, they are justified by works that come out of the faith they have in what God has told them, even though God has told them different things to have faith in.

In the context of James 2, James brings up Rahab as an example to show that even Gentiles, in Israel’s program, are justified by faith plus works. Therefore, Satan cannot go back to doctrine from the dispensation of grace to trick people into thinking they are saved by faith alone, as that applies to a different dispensation.

2:26 The analogy, here, is perfect. Faith is part of your spirit. You have the ability to make your body do whatever your spirit tells it to do. So, in today's dispensation, if you have faith in what God has said, you will reckon yourself "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God" (Romans 6:11). The result will be that you will "yield ... your members [of your body] unto God, as those that are alive from the dead" (Romans 6:13). So, your spirit tells your body what to do, which means that your works will be according to your faith.

Now, here's the difference in the two programs: 1) In the mystery dispensation, because we NOW have the atonement (Romans 5:11), we NOW have the Holy Spirit living inside us (Romans 5:5). This is possible because our body of sin has been crucified to the cross with Christ (Romans 6:6). Since this transformation has already taken place, the works that come out of faith are not our works, but they are Christ's works. We just walk in His works that He does through us. That is what Ephesians 2:10 says: "good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Therefore, these works are Christ's works—not ours. This means that our faith is not dead, because Christ's faith is not dead, because His faith has already been imputed to us, since we have already received the atonement, and 2) In the prophecy program, believers do not receive the atonement until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-21). Therefore, Israel can lose the faith of Jesus Christ, which means they would lose their own souls. Therefore, they must have works of faith; otherwise, their faith "is dead, being alone" (2:17), and they place faith in themselves or the Antichrist, rather than in God's promises to them. By contrast, in the mystery program, Christ has already done the good works for us, and we just walk in them. If we fail to walk in them, we are still saved because Christ's faith is still alive in us, because Christ's works keep His faith alive. In the prophecy program, if Israel denies Christ by worshipping the image of the beast, Christ will deny them before His Father (Matthew 10:32-33), because they are not yet God's adopted sons.

3 After showing Israel in chapter 2 that justification, in their program, is by faith plus works, James talks about how, without God controlling it, the tongue leads both the speaker and the hearer astray (vs. 1-12). This is especially seen in the Antichrist and apostate Israel in the tribulation period, because they are evil and "a corrupt tree [cannot] bring forth good fruit" (Matthew 7:18). Instead, the little flock needs to allow the Holy Ghost to control their tongues by reading God's Word to them for that time period and believing it so that they speak heavenly wisdom, rather than earthly wisdom, which is devilish (vs. 13-17). They will then sow peace, helping others make peace with others by reaping "the fruit of righteousness," which comes to Israel in the tribulation period by believing the gospel of the kingdom (v. 18).

3:1-2 James has just explained how Israel, in the tribulation period, is justified by faith plus works of faith. Some will preach justification by faith alone (2:14), leading their followers to hell. Apostate Israel will preach self-righteousness, as shown in the parable of Luke 18:10-14, which will also lead their followers to hell. It is the little flock's job, then, to preach the true gospel of faith plus works in order to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. That is why Isaiah 52:7 says, "How

beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation.”

God made Ezekiel an example of this for the little flock in the tribulation period to follow. God told Ezekiel that he was “a watchman unto the house of Israel” (Ezekiel 3:17). If he did not warn the wicked to save his life, God would require the wicked’s blood at Ezekiel’s hand (Ezekiel 3:18). Similarly, Jesus tells the believing remnant of Israel to “watch therefore” (Matthew 24:42) and give the midnight cry to warn Israel of Jesus’ soon return (Matthew 25:6). Therefore, “by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:37).

This is why 3:1 warns Israel to “be not many masters.” In other words, in the tribulation period, believing Israel’s job is to watch and warn of God’s impending judgment (5:9). It is not to condemn people to hell, which is the job of the one “Master, even Christ” (Matthew 23:10). If they do condemn people, Jesus warns that they will be condemned themselves (Luke 6:37). In fact, they will “receive the greater condemnation” (3:1), meaning a hotter place in hell than those they are condemning.

Now, you may say, “but, what if they deserve to be condemned?” The fact is that all deserve to be condemned on their own merits, because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Therefore, this is an issue of roles, not merit. In fact, Jude 9 says that not even Michael the archangel would condemn the devil, but said, “The Lord rebuke thee.” Similarly, the little flock is not in the master role of condemning people. Instead, they are in the watching role so that they may warn wicked Israel of judgment so that they may believe the gospel and be saved.

The reason the believing remnant is not in the master role is because “the tongue can no man tame” (3:8). Therefore, “in many things we offend all” (3:2) with the tongue. So, if a member of the little flock makes himself the master, he will offend others and lead them astray. Then, those led astray will be condemned to the lake of fire, and those leading them astray “shall receive the greater condemnation” (3:1), meaning a hotter place in hell.

Since the tongue can do eternal damage, James spends this whole chapter, warning the little flock of its dangers. We have already seen that works with faith make a man perfect (2:22). Now, we are told that “a perfect man” does not offend others in word (3:2). Therefore, bridling the tongue is a natural result of being justified by faith plus works.

Now, when 3:2 refers to offending people, it is talking about causing them to lose faith in God. Matthew 18:3-7 says that offending those with childlike faith is worse than being drowned in the sea. That is because Matthew 13:41-42 says that those, who offend, will be cast into a furnace of fire. It is not talking about offending people in the flesh. In fact, offending people in the flesh is a direct result of having faith in God, since the cross of Christ is an offence to others (Romans 9:33; Galatians 5:11; I Peter 2:8).

3:3-4 James shows how horses and ships are controlled by little things, just like man's whole body is controlled by his tongue (3:2). The bit in the horse's mouth is mentioned in Psalm 32:9, where God tells Israel not to be like the horse that must be controlled by the bit. In other words, Israel should have the faith in God to go with Him by faith. Similarly, in the tribulation period, Israel should have the faith in God to obey His Word, rather than being controlled by man's tongue.

3:5 Now, we see the problem of the tongue. It "boasteth great things" (3:5). The tongue speaks of the pride of man. That was Satan's problem when he spoke 6, great things against God (Isaiah 14:13-14), causing his fall. That will be the Antichrist's problem, as well (Daniel 11:36). It is also man's problem. Even if man does not overtly say that he will exalt himself above God and make himself great, he will say this indirectly by following the Antichrist's religion, because he will trust in what man says, rather than in what God says. This is how the tongue guides the whole body. The tongue says that "religion sounds good. I will follow that instead of what God says." Now, the whole body will be cast into hell.

A great example of such apostasy is seen in Jeremiah 44:16-17 when Israel says, "As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth." That is what apostate Israel will do during the tribulation period. They will follow the Babylonian religious system, rather than the word of God. Therefore, James warns them to beware of how their tongue guides them.

Examples of the "little fire" (3:5) of the tongue in the tribulation period are a false gospel (2:14), "I am Christ" (Matthew 24:5), false prophecies (Matthew 24:11), "here is Christ" (Matthew 24:23), "great swelling words of vanity" (II Peter 2:18; Jude 16), and mockers (Jude 18).

3:6 James 3 is used by all of Christianity to say that we had better be careful what we say to people. They take it to mean that we should not say hurtful things about others or get mad and yell at people. They say to be careful not to offend anyone. But, that is not what James is talking about.

Ephesians 4:26 says, "be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This means that, if you are angry at someone, have it out with him before the day is up. Bottling it up inside is worse than telling that person exactly what you think, even if it means offending him. After all, Jesus was not concerned with offending others by what He said. One time, Jesus' disciples told Him: "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?" (Matthew 15:12). Jesus' response was: "Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind" (Matthew 15:13-14). Jesus did not say, "I am so sorry for making the powerful, religious leaders mad at Me. I should have known that My 'tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity'" (3:6). As you can see, Jesus was not the least bit concerned with offending others.

Therefore, the tongue's danger is not in offending people with the truth, but it is in not telling people the truth. If a false gospel is preached, those believing it will go to hell. Therefore, the lesson for James' audience to learn is that if the tongue guides Israel to follow apostasy in the tribulation period, like it did in Jeremiah's day, it will defile the whole body. Jesus said, "those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man" (Matthew 15:18). Apostate Israel will use the tongue to speak forth the unbelief of their heart, setting their whole body on course to experience the fire of hell. This is especially true when the image of the beast is set up to begin the Great Tribulation period (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period).

Israel "shall be brought before rulers and kings" (Mark 13:9). If they deny Christ with their tongue before men, then Christ will deny them before the Father (Matthew 10:33). However, if they confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord, and not the Antichrist, they will be saved if the confession stems from a belief in the heart (Romans 10:9). "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh" (Matthew 12:34). Since many will have to confess what they believe and their confession means either eternal life in God's kingdom or hell, the tongue can defile the whole body, bringing it into hell ("If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43)). Israel needs to realize this. Otherwise, they may think, "I'll bow down to the Antichrist and ask God for forgiveness later." It will be too late, then. All they will have later is "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation" (Hebrews 10:27) "for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29).

3:7-8 The power of the tongue is seen in that it has more power than any animal God created. Man has dominion over animals (Genesis 1:26), and so he can tame them, but no man can tame the tongue (3:8). It takes God to do that. "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). So, in the tribulation period, when Israel repents (stops trusting in their own self-righteousness and trusts in God's imputed righteousness to them through the law covenant) and is water baptized, they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38). Then, when they are brought before men, judges, and kings, the Holy Ghost tames their tongue, giving them the words to say (Mark 13:11), so that they speak words of belief in Jesus being the Lord and the Christ (Acts 2:36), rather than speaking "unruly evil" (3:8).

Remember that Israel is not justified until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-21). Since the tongue speaks what is in the heart and the heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9), no man can tame his own tongue not to speak evil. It will take the Holy Ghost to give the believing remnant boldness to speak the word of God (Acts 4:31). Then, instead of killing people by the tongue, God will save Israel by it (Proverbs 12:18-19). "Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Proverbs 18:21).

3:9-10 The heart is desperately wicked. The heart is also deceitful above all things (Jeremiah 17:9), meaning that it tries to hide its wickedness by putting on sheep's

clothing (Matthew 7:15). Since the tongue speaks what is in the heart, the tongue is deceitful, as well. Apostate Israel will bless God with their tongue by doing great things in God's name. They will prophesy, cast out devils, and do many wonderful works in the Lord's name, but they are really working iniquity (Matthew 7:22-23), because they do so out of their desperately wicked hearts.

At the same time, they curse believing Israel (2:6) for not going along with their religious system, even going as far as killing them and withholding food from them (Revelation 13:15-17). All the while, they think they are doing God service (John 16:2).

We know that believing Israel are the people they curse because 3:9 says that the men, who they curse, "are made after the similitude of God." Adam was made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Then, Adam fell, and man has been made in the fallen image of Adam ever since (Genesis 5:3). But, then God promised "that holy thing" (Luke 1:35), which is believing Israel "born again" (John 3:7). So, believing Israel is "made after the similitude of God" (3:9). This means that, when apostate Israel blesses God with their religion and curses man for believing God's Word to them, apostate Israel is really blessing and cursing God with their tongue. Why, then, would believing Israel believe what apostate Israel and the Antichrist say, since what they say is the "deadly poison" (3:8) of deceit, coming from a desperately wicked heart?

Religion puts itself above others (Romans 2:1-5; Matthew 23:27-33) in an effort to appear more righteous than other unbelievers. But, the truth is that all unbelievers are in the same, sinful situation (Romans 3:23). Therefore, they should not condemn others (John 3:17-19), because, in doing so, they condemn themselves (Luke 6:37).

3:11 Since both good and bad cannot proceed from the same source, believing Israel can see the words of apostate Israel for what they are—evil—and not follow them. Jesus gave a similar warning: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit....Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:19-20).

It is no accident that a fountain is mentioned in 3:11, because God says that He is "the fountain of living waters" (Jeremiah 2:13). Therefore, believing Jews will have "rivers of living water" flow out of their bellies (John 7:38).

3:12 James asks if a fig tree can bear olive berries. Of course, the answer is "no." The fig tree, in the Bible, represents religion (see Genesis 3:7 and Matthew 21:19-21), and the olive tree represents the Spirit (see Genesis 8:11, Matthew 3:16, and Romans 11:17). Therefore, not only is James telling Israel that apostate Israel cannot be trusted, but he is also showing that the religion (the fig tree) of the Antichrist cannot produce life in the Spirit (the olive tree). Only "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Therefore, only by believing the gospel of the kingdom, and the kingdom doctrine associated with it found in God's Word to

Israel, can Israel have life in the kingdom. They cannot get life out of the Antichrist's religion.

The next statement is that a vine cannot produce figs. The vine represents the national life of Israel (see Isaiah 5:7, Matthew 20:1, and Matthew 21:33). The point is that the Antichrist's nation (Babylon) cannot produce a religion (figs) that will give Israel life. Instead, believing Israel is to abide in the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 15:1). They will then produce the fruit of the Spirit, rather than figs, which is the fruit of religion.

3:13 In 1:5-6, James said that God gives wisdom liberally based on the little flock having faith in God's Word. Since Israel's religious leaders do not do this, the wise man in the tribulation period is not found among Israel's religious leaders. Jesus said, "by their fruits, ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:20). More specifically, James tells, here, that Israel will recognize a wise man by his conversation or lifestyle.

"Meekness of wisdom" means there is no pride involved with the works that the wise man does. Therefore, the wise man shows his faith by his works (2:18) in the lifestyle that he leads by obeying God's commandments in humbleness. When the little flock sees someone like that, they know what he speaks is God's wisdom, not man's wisdom. This is in contrast to the man, who lets his tongue lead his life. That man is unwise, speaking deadly poison (3:8).

3:14 This verse is what we see Christianity doing today. How much more, then, will they be doing it in the tribulation period! Apostate Israel and the Antichrist will have riches and power during the tribulation period. If believing Israel wants to lay up treasures in earthly things, rather than in heavenly things (Matthew 6:19-20), their heart will be on what the apostate nation has (Matthew 6:21). If that is the case, believing Israel will have "bitter envying and strife" in their hearts (3:14). They will then glory in the things of this world. Since those things are not of God, they would be lying "against the truth" (3:14). In other words, they would start using their tongue to preach the health-and-wealth gospel. Then, they would fall into apostasy to prove, in their pride, that the health-and-wealth gospel is true, by joining themselves with apostate Israel. That is what Christianity has done today. They have joined themselves to the world to gain the things of the world, forsaking the preaching of the cross and godly living, which leads to persecution (II Timothy 3:12).

Paul warns that, when men think that gain is godliness, they will use corrupt minds to dispute the things of God to twist them in such a way that gives them material wealth (I Timothy 6:5). That is why those, who love money, will err from the faith (I Timothy 6:10). In the tribulation period, the Antichrist and apostate Israel have great, material wealth because they have done just that (Revelation 18:3).

Therefore, James tells believing Israel that, if they are seeking the things of the world, stop associating the world with the truth of God's Word. Gain is NOT godliness. They need to get their hearts straight first. In other words, "first cast out

the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:5).

3:15-16 By seeking after the things of the world, believing Israel is using earthly wisdom, not heavenly wisdom. This is "devilish" (3:15) wisdom, because Satan is "the god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4). It creates "envying and strife" (3:16), as seen in 4:1. I Timothy 6:4 says that envy and strife comes from "doting about questions and strifes of words." In other words, devilish wisdom is nothing more than false doctrine, and false doctrine leads to "every evil work" (3:16). Therefore, if believing Israel allows the devil to convince them to believe false doctrine, their works will also come from the devil—not from God—meaning that they will not have the works that go with their faith to save them (2:24).

Note that "EVERY evil work" comes from the devil's wisdom, which shows that, if Israel wants to do good works, they need to get into God's Word and believe it, rather than following after the things of the world and doing Satan's will, as a result. Also, notice that, when believing Israel uses earthly wisdom, "there is confusion" (3:16). That is certainly true, because they claim to be God's people and to be following God, yet they speak things contrary to God's Word because they are using earthly wisdom in order to get riches and power in the Antichrist's kingdom. So, there is confusion.

It is the same today in Christianity. Pastors quote scripture from the pulpit, and they make it say something that it does not say. That is why people say they cannot understand the Bible. It is not that the Bible cannot be understood, but it is that Christianity is confused, because they read the Bible and they are told that it says something that it does not say. They assume their pastors are right, while the Holy Spirit within them is wrong. Therefore, they stop studying the Bible and rely solely on what their churches tell them to believe.

For example, they read that they are to give as they purpose in their hearts (II Corinthians 9:7), but they do not accept that as true, because their pastors told them that they must give at least 10% to God and what they had purposed in their heart was less than 10%. Similarly, in the tribulation period, the law tells Israel not to serve other gods or make images, yet religious Israel will tell them to bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). So, many will bow down because their "Messiah," i.e., the Antichrist, told them to do so.

Also, note, in 3:15, how the devil works. He starts with your flesh ("earthly") and gets your soul and emotions involved ("sensual") to control your spirit ("devilish"). By contrast, God starts with your spirit, by teaching it God's Word (I Corinthians 2:10-14), which strengthens the soul (Ephesians 3:16), causing your flesh to walk by the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:23), rather than your spirit walking by your body.

3:17 Contrast the fruit of earthly wisdom (3:15-16) with the fruit of heavenly wisdom, and it becomes easy for Israel to tell the two, competing systems apart in the tribulation period. Heavenly wisdom is pure (3:17), meaning that it does not lie against the truth, like earthly wisdom does (3:14). Therefore, right off the bat,

Israel will be able to tell that apostate Israel's religion should not be followed because it goes against the law covenant found in scripture. Heavenly wisdom is "peaceable" (3:17) in the sense that it makes peace with those who seek after God's wisdom. (It does not make peace between believing Israel and apostate Israel (Matthew 10:34-36).)

"Gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits" make it easy to distinguish God's wisdom from the Antichrist's wisdom. There is no gentleness or mercy in killing believers to force them to deny Christ and align themselves with the Antichrist. Note how Proverbs 3:13 says that Israel will have to find God's wisdom, while the Antichrist's wisdom calls out to people to believe (Proverbs 9:15). In other words, if Israel wants to be saved, they must diligently seek God (Hebrews 11:6). The easy way out is the way of the devil (Matthew 7:13-14).

Also, note that God's wisdom is "without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (3:17). All may be justified by faith plus works, whether it be the Jew, like Abraham (2:21-24), or the Gentile, like Rahab (2:25). Contrast this with the Antichrist, who will make a seven-year covenant with Israel only (Daniel 9:27), showing partiality to the Jews. God's wisdom is also without hypocrisy, as it does not say one thing and do another. Those, who believe God, will have eternal life in the kingdom, and the leaders of the little flock live by the same rules as their followers do. A great example of this is Peter, who had no silver and gold (3:6) when the members of the little flock had sold their possessions and laid them at his feet (4:37). In other words, he did not get rich off of the believers, like megachurch pastors do today.

By contrast, the religious leaders of Israel "say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3). They put heavy burdens on others that they themselves would not move with one of their fingers (Matthew 23:4). They "devour widows' houses" (Matthew 23:14), but will have great wealth in the tribulation period under the Antichrist. Therefore, it is easy to spot God's wisdom versus Satan's wisdom when shown in the light of scripture. That is how Israel can be fruit inspectors (Matthew 7:20) in the tribulation period, recognizing God's wisdom and following it.

3:18 If believing Israel does the works that God would have them do in the tribulation period, i.e., preach the gospel to Israel, love one another, and obey God's law covenant with them, "the fruit of righteousness" will be the result in that others in Israel will have faith in God's promises to them and have eternal life in God's kingdom, as well. The little flock will sow the gospel in peace, and the result will be that people will have peace with God by reaping the fruit of righteousness. These "peacemakers," then, "shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9) in the kingdom. Therefore, when Israel sees apostate Israel, trying to get them to make peace with God by forcing them to take the mark of the beast and bow down to the image, they can see that their "wisdom" is not of God and will not give them righteousness. Therefore, it should not be followed.

4 Chapter 4 is a warning to believing Israel not to get caught up in what apostate Israel and the Antichrist are doing during the tribulation period. If they go after the things of the world, they will not receive the things of God in the kingdom (vs.

1-4). God will not bring them into the kingdom if they do not have faith in God and are willing to suffer for God. Only then will God give them the grace to resist the devil (vs. 5-10). Instead of following their own will (v. 13), they need to do the Lord's will (v. 15), realizing that they only have a few years to lead the sheep of Israel into God's eternal kingdom on earth (v. 14).

4:1-4 The context of these verses is Israel trying to have friendships with the Antichrist so that they may get the riches and power that he has. God wants the little flock to learn the lesson that spiritual food is what is important, not physical food (Deuteronomy 8:3). This is so important that He allows the Antichrist to control the world's economy (Revelation 13:16-17), such that the little flock will go hungry (2:15), because they are not to take the mark of the beast (Revelation 14:9-11). Unfortunately, some of the little flock will allow their flesh to take control, and they will cater to the rich (2:2-3). This will result in "wars and fightings among" them (4:1). They are even willing to turn in fellow Jews, who are part of believing Israel, to have them killed (4:2), just so they can obtain riches. Because they are concentrating on the flesh, they "cannot obtain" (4:2; Matthew 5:6). They should be asking for spiritual riches instead. Then, their heavenly Father will give them the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:9-13).

So, they "kill and desire to have," but they "cannot obtain" (4:2) the true riches of God in the kingdom, because they are following the Antichrist and not the true Christ. The way we know this to be the case is by looking at 4:3. They "ask and receive not, because [they] ask amiss." They must not be asking the Father in Christ's name, because Christ said, "If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14). They may claim that promise, but they ask the Antichrist instead. Therefore, they "ask amiss" (4:3). Therefore, they do not receive what they ask for.

Because they are following a different god—Satan and his christ—they are "adulterers and adulteresses" (4:4). They have cheated on God by going to Satan's Antichrist (Revelation 18:3-4). The warning is that they cannot have it both ways. They cannot be friends with the world and receive the things of the world, while also serving God. If they serve one, they are the enemy of the other. As Jesus told them in Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Also, how can they be friends of the world when the world hates them (Matthew 10:22)?

4:5 The scripture referenced here is Genesis 6:5, which says that every thought of man in the days of Noah was "only evil continually." How appropriate that a scripture from Noah's day is cited because, in referring to the tribulation period, Jesus said, "As the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37). We also see from Noah's day that devils were having sex with women to create superhuman creatures (Genesis 6:4). We also see a great amount of activity of devils when Jesus was on earth, which was just before the tribulation period was supposed to start. And, when the Antichrist takes the throne in the temple, halfway through the tribulation period (II Thessalonians 2:3-4), the devil's activity increases even more.

On top of that, “the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (4:5). Before being saved, your spirit is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Since saved Israel does not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-21), they still have dead spirits during the tribulation period. Therefore, when they see apostate Israel’s great wealth under the Antichrist, they will envy them, such that they will try to be their friends and be willing to commit spiritual adultery in order to gain material wealth during the tribulation period (4:4).

4:6-7 “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord” in his situation (Genesis 6:8). Since he kept God’s commandment to him (John 15:14), Noah would have been God’s friend, much like Abraham was God’s friend (2:23). As we mentioned in the commentary in 2:23, the term “friend” is a transitional term for Israel. When Israel has faith plus the works of faith, they are called God’s friends (III John 14), but they do not become God’s sons until Jesus’ second coming (Revelation 21:7).

Israel needs to learn the lesson that Noah learned, which is that “the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy” (4:5). They will then walk with God, as Noah did (Genesis 6:9), by believing the gospel of the kingdom. Thus, God will give them grace, as He gave Noah (Genesis 6:8). This will make them God’s friends. Then, if they do not become friends with the world (4:4) but they endure unto the end of the tribulation period, they will be saved (Matthew 24:13). This means that they will have eternal life in the kingdom, which is the “more grace” that God gives to the humble (4:6), which is a quote of Proverbs 3:34. In other words, they will become humble if they continue to believe the gospel of the kingdom, in spite of the riches of the Antichrist and the persecution from them. This is the refiner’s process of the tribulation period that the Lord promises to put them through (Malachi 3:2-4). They will then receive the “more grace” of becoming God’s sons in the kingdom (Revelation 21:7). Since humility is what the Lord is building in them during the tribulation period, James went over the dangers of the tongue in chapter 3. The tongue is “an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (3:8) because it “boasteth great things” (3:5), which is why the tongue “is set on fire of hell” (3:6).

“Submit yourselves therefore to God” (4:7). Instead of using the tongue to boast against God, Israel should submit themselves to God by putting themselves under God’s law covenant with them, instead of aligning themselves with the Antichrist. Israel will then find grace in the eyes of the Lord, like Noah did, and will be saved from God’s wrath to come at the end of the tribulation period, like Noah was saved from God’s wrath in the worldwide flood.

By putting themselves under the law covenant, the little flock is resisting the devil, causing the devil to flee. Now, that does not mean that they will not suffer afflictions or be killed. In fact, it means that they will suffer, because suffering is necessary in order to build humility. I Peter 5:8-9 agrees with this by saying that, if they resist the devil, they will suffer afflictions. The devil’s fleeing, then, means that “the spirit that ... lusteth to envy” (4:5) will flee so that they do God’s will. In other words, to avoid Satan’s trap under the Antichrist of getting people caught up in the things of this world (4:1-4), the little flock needs to submit themselves to God (4:7). Then, the devil will flee from them, and God’s grace will cause them to

endure unto the end of the tribulation period and be saved (Matthew 24:13) to receive more grace in the kingdom. This is how the little flock will come out of the apostate nation and be separate (Isaiah 52:11). Without the tribulation period, though, there will not be the incentive to separate out from apostasy, which is why God brings the tribulation period in the first place, “to purify the sons of Levi” (Malachi 3:3).

4:8 Again, if Israel is to be part of God’s eternal kingdom on earth, the onus is on them to have faith in God’s promises to them under the law covenant. With that faith, they trust in God to bring them into the kingdom, regardless of what trials they face. Their faith, tried by the refiner’s fire of the tribulation period, is how they “draw nigh unto God” (4:8). By putting themselves under the law covenant, Israel is cleansing their hands of wrongdoing and purifying their hearts from the religion and ways of the Antichrist and apostate Israel. They are then no longer double minded (4:8), which means that they are not trying to serve both God and mammon (Matthew 6:24). Rather, they are stable in walking in the ways of the Lord (1:8). It is only in that condition that believing Israel can have a holy God draw nigh to them to give them the grace they need (through the power of the Holy Ghost) to serve God in a world controlled by the devil.

4:9 The bad part is that, since the world is controlled by the devil, the little flock’s faith in God’s Word to them will result in them being afflicted, mourning, and weeping (4:9). They will lose their riches and power by aligning themselves with God, because they will not worship the image of the beast or take his mark (Revelation 13:15-18). Therefore, they will suffer. However, it is better “to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Hebrews 11:25). They need to remember that “weeping may endure for a night,” i.e., the tribulation period, “but joy cometh in the morning,” i.e., Jesus’ second coming (Psalm 30:5). God will then exalt them in the kingdom (Isaiah 61:1-3).

4:10 The fiery trials of the tribulation period are what cause Israel to set aside their pride and religion and humble themselves in the sight of the Lord. God’s promise to them is that, once the tribulation period is over, God will lift Israel up in the kingdom. I Peter 5:6 makes this clearer by saying that God will “exalt [them] in due time.” By noting the words, “due time,” we can see that they will be exalted in the life to come. How sad, then, that a “worship” song was made out of 4:10 to apply it to today and to imply health, wealth, and prosperity on this earth for the body of Christ today. I notice that no one made a “worship” song out of the previous verse (4:9) or even out of I Peter 5:6, where the phrase “in due time” is mentioned. In its context, this verse clearly refers to Israel humbling themselves in the tribulation period in order to be exalted in God’s coming kingdom. It is not saying that we, today, should believe the gospel so that God will give us riches!

Also, note from I Peter 5:6 that, in the tribulation period, the little flock is under God’s hand, but 4:10 says that they are lifted up by God’s hand in the kingdom.

4:11 Note the phrase “his brother” is used twice in this verse. If a member of the little flock speaks evil of another member of the little flock, he is discouraging that

other person from enduring unto the end and being saved. They are supposed to exhort one another to obey God (Hebrews 10:25), rather than tearing down fellow believers. A believer, who puts himself under God's law covenant with Israel, will receive redemption under the law through Jesus' atoning sacrifice that fulfilled the law.

If one believer speaks evil of another believer, he "speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law" (4:11). "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). What the law does is that it shows us that we are "exceeding sinful" (Romans 7:13). Now, if **a brother** disobeys the law, he does not lose his salvation, as long as he still believes the gospel of the kingdom. In fact, his disobedience builds humility within him and teaches him to have faith in the gospel to save him from the curse of the law. Therefore, if a brother speaks evil of his brother for his sin, then he is speaking evil of the law's ability to teach his brother that he needs to have faith until the end of the tribulation period. In other words, by speaking evil of his brother, he is really speaking evil of the law and judging it ineffective to bring his brother to Christ at the end of the tribulation period. He has then put himself above the law. He is not a doer of the law, because he does not believe it is any good. Therefore, he is judging the law.

4:12 Since God gave the law, He is the One, Who can either save or destroy the soul (Matthew 10:28). Therefore, He is the judge (Psalm 50:6 and 75:7). Israel, in the tribulation period, is not in a position to judge. That will come later in the kingdom. During the tribulation period, God is extending His grace to Israel so that they will be saved and enter the kingdom (Romans 11:25-26). Therefore, it is a time for the little flock to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the lost sheep of Israel, not to judge them into hell (Matthew 10:6-8).

4:13 This saying is in rebellion of God. God tells the little flock to go to the cities of Israel and preach the gospel of the kingdom to them (Matthew 10:5-8). They are not to settle anywhere, but they are to go from city to city until Jesus' second coming (Matthew 10:23). Also, they will not be able to buy and sell during the last 3 ½ of the tribulation period years because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Therefore, Jesus told them not to even think about such basics as food and clothing, because they will have to rely solely on the Lord to take care of them (Matthew 6:25-34). Therefore, there are several problems with the statement of 4:13: 1) They are following their own selfish desires for going to a city, rather than going there to do God's will, 2) Continuing there a year shows they are settling down, which goes against the Lord's commandment to the little flock in the tribulation period to go to the cities of Israel and preach the gospel (Matthew 10:9-14; 23:34), 3) They are going to buy and sell, which shows a willingness to take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17), and thus sell their souls to the devil (Revelation 14:9-11), and 4) They are seeking gain, when they should be selling what they have and giving it away (Luke 12:33), seeking first the kingdom of God, instead (Luke 12:31). The parable of Luke 12:16-21 calls such a man a "fool."

4:14 Israel needs to realize that the tribulation period lasts for 7 years, while God’s kingdom on earth lasts for all eternity. When compared to eternity, 7 years “is even a vapour” (4:14). It will be gone soon. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul” (Matthew 16:26). Therefore, they should not trade eternal riches for temporal riches that will not last more than a few years. Israel needs the eternal perspective—the perspective of faith that looks for a heavenly city (Hebrews 11:16), “whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10), rather than looking for a city that man has built (4:13), because man’s cities will all be destroyed at Jesus’ second coming.

4:15 Therefore, instead of following their own plans (4:13), Israel needs to follow the Lord’s will. The Lord is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). Therefore, if they say, “If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (4:15), then they are basing their decisions on people getting saved or not. Instead of saying, “I am going to city A to make a bunch of money (4:13),” they should say, “I will go to city A and find out who wants to hear the gospel. Once I find no one else willing to hear the gospel or they persecute me, I will go to a different city.” This type of thinking is in line with the Lord’s will and is what Jesus commanded, in Matthew 10:11-14, that the little flock do, so that all Israel will be saved (Romans 11:26). This is far more important than building an earthly treasure that will last, at most, a few years.

The idea of seeking eternal treasures, rather than temporal treasures, is the same for us today in the dispensation of grace, as Paul says to “set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Galatians 3:2). How sad that Christians today have twisted James 4:15 to say that they need to pray over every decision to get a sense of what God wants them to do, when God has already given them His Word and His Spirit so that they can make those decisions themselves.

4:16-17 Seeing apostate Israel rise to power under the Antichrist, some in believing Israel will start to boast of the great things they will do on the earth for themselves. When Israel takes over a city, some will say, “Let us go to that city and get gain” (4:13). Rejoicing in boastings and their own plans is evil (4:16). Instead, they should “do good” (4:17), which is to do the Lord’s will (4:15), which is to do the work of the kingdom (heal the sick, cast out devils, and preach the gospel (Matthew 10:6-8)). They are also to watch for the signs of the times (Matthew 24:42 and 25:13) so that they can give the midnight cry (Matthew 25:6) to sleeping Israel (Matthew 25:5) so that those, of slumbering Israel who have believed the gospel, will be saved (Matthew 25:10). All of these things are the doing good that 4:17 talks about.

This shows how important it is to rightly divide the Word of truth (II Timothy 2:15). Christianity tries to apply James to us today, which changes the meaning of “do good” in 4:17. Therefore, a church will tell its members that they must do certain works at the church or they are sinning. After all, “to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (4:17). So, start putting out tables and chairs for our fellowship gathering! However, when we rightly divide, we understand that the

“good,” of 4:17, is for Israel, in the tribulation period, to preach the gospel, do the signs of the kingdom, and watch for the Lord’s returning. These things have a much greater eternal significance.

This misunderstanding of doing good should remind us of Jesus’ statement about the Jewish religious leaders of His day in Matthew 23:23. There, He said that they paid tithes of their spices but omitted judgment, mercy, and faith. Similarly today, Christianity focuses on giving money to the poor, feeding children, and helping people in third-world countries, when they should have a greater focus on preaching the gospel and walking in the Spirit. By doing the former, rather than the latter, they have a form of godliness, so that they appear good to men, which is all they really care about anyway (John 12:43).

5 This chapter shows the little flock the necessity of enduring unto the end of the tribulation period, maintaining their faith in God. First, James warns believing Israel that following riches will lead to their destruction (vs. 1-6). Second, he encourages them to be patient, just like God is patient (vs. 7-8). Next, he gives the prophets and Job as examples of believers, who patiently waited for God’s deliverance (vs. 10-11). The little flock may succumb to temptation, but God will restore them spiritually through the elders’ prayer of faith (vs. 13-15). The intent of their suffering is to make them righteous (vs. 16 & 20), so that they may lead unbelievers in Israel to be saved, as well (vs. 17-20). Thus, James concludes this epistle, showing how the patience of the saints brings them, and others, into God’s kingdom.

5:1 In 4:13, James gave a warning to those in Israel seeking wealth on this earth. Now, in 5:1, he warns the rich men, the ones who have already gained wealth thanks to following apostate Israel and the Antichrist. Jesus said in Matthew 16:26: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” These rich men gave their souls in exchange for the riches of the world, because they took the mark of the beast so that they could “buy and sell, and get gain” (4:13 & Revelation 13:17). Now, all they have left is “a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour” (Hebrews 10:27) them. At Jesus’ second coming, they will “weep and howl for [the] miseries that shall come upon [them]” (5:1). We see this happening in Zechariah 12:11-14.

5:2-3 II Peter 3:10 says that “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.” In Matthew 6:19-20, Jesus told Israel not to lay up for themselves treasures on earth, which will be corrupted and stolen by thieves. At Jesus’ second coming, the fire of the wrath of almighty God will be poured out. Because their riches are of this world, they will be burned, like wood, hay, and stubble are burned. Therefore, their riches, their garments, and their gold and silver will be corrupted, moth-eaten, and cankered, respectively (5:2-3). What they spent their lives seeking will be destroyed by the fire of God. That is how Jesus’ second coming is likened to a thief, because he “steals away” their treasures by burning them up in fiery judgment (Malachi 3:2-3). When they are left with rust, instead of pure gold and silver, that rust will be a witness against them (5:3) that they are of the devil, and

not of God. The treasure that they heaped together for the last days is no more. Since their heart is where their treasure is, they will not be in God's kingdom either (Matthew 6:21).

Jesus explained this in Luke 12:20, when he said to the man gathering stuff in his barn that he was foolish, because "this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Christians, who do not rightly divide, have a hard time explaining that statement by Jesus, because they try to apply it today, but they also want to sock away money for retirement. Also, I Timothy 5:8 says, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." So, under Israel's program when the kingdom of heaven is at hand, saving is foolish, while under the mystery program today, not saving to provide for your house makes you worse than an infidel. Only by recognizing the two programs in scripture can both be true. Therefore, by rightly dividing, we can conclude that storing up riches is a no-no only in the tribulation period when doing so leads to selling your soul to the devil by taking the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17).

With regard to their garments, Psalm 14:3 says that all people have become filthy because none do good. Thus, man's self-righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). However, for those in Israel, who trust in God to give them His righteousness by putting themselves under the law covenant and being water baptized, they will receive white robes of righteousness (Revelation 3:4 and 19:8).

With regard to the fire, Matthew 3:11 says that the Lord Jesus Christ will baptize Israel with fire. If they believe, they go through the refiner's fire of the tribulation period and are purged as gold and silver so that they enter the kingdom (Malachi 3:2-4). If they are in unbelief, they will be burned with the unquenchable fire of hell for all eternity (Matthew 3:12 and Mark 9:43-44). Thus, exposure to the refiner's fire causes believing Israel to be purified, but exposure to "the prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2) causes apostate Israel's riches to rust.

5:4 "The Lord of sabaoth" is the Lord of the Sabbath rest. Isaiah 1:9 says that, "except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Romans 9:29 quotes that verse, changing "the Lord of hosts" to "the Lord of Sabaoth." What this tells us is that the Lord of Sabaoth refers to God's grace in not completely destroying Israel. Therefore, He will bring them into the kingdom, which represents the Sabbath rest.

By contrast, apostate Israel makes people labour in their fields. Their wages are kept from them because of the fraud of apostate Israel. In other words, the Antichrist has fraudulently represented himself as God (II Thessalonians 2:3-4), causing Jews to think that, if they work for him, they will be rewarded by God in the kingdom. Because the Antichrist is not God, those, who work for him, will not receive their wages. However, the Lord of Sabaoth has heard their cries which means that, if they believe the gospel of the kingdom, the Lord will reward them

with a position in His kingdom, in spite of the fact that they worked for the Antichrist's kingdom.

In fact, God has put their tears in His bottle (Psalm 56:8; Revelation 8:3-5) so that, when the Great White Throne Judgment comes, those tears can be used as evidence to give greater punishment to apostate Israel, who oppressed them (Matthew 23:35). Therefore, not only will apostate Israel lose their riches (vs. 1-3), but they will also receive a greater punishment in the lake of fire for oppressing believing Israel (v. 4). Most fathers would beat the living snot out of anyone who hurt their children, and Father God is no exception to this (Psalm 56:7).

5:5-6 "As in the day of slaughter" (5:5) can be taken literally here, because the Great Tribulation period is "a day" in which apostate Israel kills the just (5:6). They have believing Israel killed (Revelation 6:9-10) for not abandoning faith in God and for not following the Antichrist's religion, as shown by them not being willing to bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). Therefore, the riches of apostate Israel and the satisfying of their flesh come at the expense of killing God's faithful believers in Israel.

"He doth not resist you" (5:6) means that the just, who are killed, do not even fight their own unjust murders. Why? Because God told them to "resist not evil" and turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39-42). The little flock is to look "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), and leave vengeance up to God to recompense apostate Israel for their evil deeds (Hebrews 10:30).

5:7 Luke 21:19 says, "in your patience possess ye your souls." How true that is for the little flock in the Great Tribulation. "A day of slaughter" (5:5) is going on in the Great Tribulation, and they are the sheep being slaughtered! Because "no man ever yet hated his own flesh" (Ephesians 5:29), it will be very easy for the little flock to take their eyes off of the eternal rewards waiting for them in God's kingdom and deny Christ before men so that the Antichrist does not kill them. Therefore, James has warned them, in 5:1-6, of what will happen to them if they do this. They will only be saved from hell by God if they endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 24:13). Therefore, we see the call for patience, here, "unto the coming of the Lord" (5:7).

"The husbandman," of this verse, is God the Father (John 15:1). "The early and latter rain," as it relates to Israel in Joel 2:23, refers to God "pouring" out His Spirit upon them in the last days (Joel 2:23,28), which is the early rain, and then pouring His Spirit upon them in their hearts permanently under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:26-27), which is the latter rain.

However, 5:7 says "until HE [the husbandman] receive the early and latter rain." The early and latter rain for the Lord are different from the early and latter rain for Israel. The early rain for the Lord is when He receives Israel as His bride in the kingdom at His second coming. The latter rain is when He receives the Gentiles in His kingdom on earth after the millennial reign and the final battle with Satan are

won. The Lord has waited thousands of years for these two rains, because He knows that His longsuffering is the only way that so many people will be reconciled back to Him. Therefore, He is waiting for “the PRECIOUS fruit of the earth” (5:7), which would be believers (Mark 4:8).

Since God has that kind of longsuffering, surely the little flock of believing Israel can be patient for a few years during the tribulation period, until Jesus’ second coming. Note that the saved of the earth are called “precious” fruit. Just like the tastiest fruit does not come without going through wind and torrential downpours of rain, saved Israel would not be so precious to God if they do not go through the trials of the tribulation period.

5:8 Again, if the Lord can be patient for thousands of years, the little flock can be patient for a few years of tribulation, as well. The way they will be patient unto the end is if they “stablish [their] hearts” (5:8), having faith in God’s promises to bring them into the kingdom. Only then will God give them the grace (4:6) to endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 10:22).

By the way, “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” tells us that the book of James had to have been written before Acts 7. Otherwise, the coming of the Lord would have been put on hold, pending the completion of the dispensation of grace.

5:9 Since the Lord’s coming “draweth nigh” (5:8), His standing before the door as judge means He will judge Israel soon. The door, that He stands before, is the door of the sheepfold of Israel. Jesus says in Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” People use that verse today to say that Jesus is knocking on your heart’s door, and you better ask Jesus into your heart in order to be saved. That is what religion says. However, by looking at the context, James 5:9 says that Jesus is standing before the door to judge His enemies. Isaiah 3:13 says, “The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.” Psalm 110:1 says that the Lord will sit at the Father’s right hand UNTIL His enemies are made His footstool. Therefore, when He stands up, He stands up to judge. The fact, that He is standing before the door in 5:9, signifies that He is close to coming into the house of Israel (at His second coming) to judge His enemies (the Antichrist and apostate Israel).

Jacob married Rachel, but, when he went into the house to consummate the marriage, Leah was there, and Jacob joined himself to Leah, instead of Rachel. However, the Lord Jesus Christ will not make this mistake. He will see apostate Israel as the false bride and will take them away to judgment (Luke 17:34-37). Then, He will call to His sheep, and they will follow Him (John 10:3-4) out of the house of Israel and into His Father’s house, where He has a place prepared for them (John 14:2-3). They will then sup with Him (Revelation 3:20) at “the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9). Therefore, the warning of 5:9 relates to the tribulation period when this time is at hand. If they do not believe the gospel of the kingdom, Jesus will come through the door of the sheepfold and judge them.

This verse is also telling the little flock not to grudge one another so as to cause each other to stop trusting in God's promise to them and succumb to the Antichrist. The judge will appear at any moment, and they will be condemned if they lose faith at the end. Satan's policy will be to wear out the saints so they get tired of fighting. Jesus said that, "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved" (Matthew 24:22). It is at the end of the tribulation period, then, when believers will need the most exhortation, especially as they "see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25). James provides the last-days exhortation for them right here. Be patient (5:8), and grudge not each other (5:9), because God will soon judge the house of Israel.

5:10 Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all of the Old Testament prophets are examples to the little flock of suffering affliction with patience in order to obtain eternal life in God's kingdom on earth. Since they did it, the little flock can survive, too. That is why the writer of Hebrews wrote chapter 11—to give them examples of faithful people in Israel, who survived afflictions from the religious crowd in Israel.

5:11 Those, with patience to endure unto the end of the tribulation period, are happy, because of the eternal rewards they will receive as a result. Job is a type of the little flock going through the tribulation period. He was very wealthy and lost everything he had, including his health, but he received double what he originally had when his tribulations were over (Job 42:10). Similarly, the little flock is promised to receive everlasting life and "an hundredfold" for what they lost for God's sake (Matthew 19:29). Jesus said over and over in Matthew 5:3-12 that the little flock will be blessed for enduring unto the end of the tribulation period "for great is your reward." Therefore, those, who endure for Christ's sake, are counted as happy (5:11).

5:12 By itself, swearing is not bad. God swore by Himself when He made a promise to Abraham (Hebrews 6:13). An angel will swear by God when the dispensation of the fulness of times begins (Revelation 10:6). Moreover, under the Mosaic law, God told Israel to swear by the Lord's name (Deuteronomy 6:13). However, during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, swearing is not a good thing.

Jesus went into this in more detail in Matthew 5:33-37. (Since James is written to the little flock of Israel (1:1), 5:12 is a proof that the book of Matthew is written to Israel while the kingdom is at hand, and it is NOT written to us today in the dispensation of grace.) The problem is that man lies because of his deceitful heart (Jeremiah 17:9). Because he lies, he has to try to make his word sound truthful by saying, "I swear by heaven that I will...." Now that he has deceived someone by his oath, he then goes ahead and does the opposite of what he just said. If saved Jews swear by things but do not do them, they bring greater condemnation upon themselves, because now they have made God's throne look bad if they swore by heaven (Matthew 5:34) or they make God's city look bad if they swore by New Jerusalem (Matthew 5:35).

Also, Romans 7:9-11 says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was

ordained to life, I found to be death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.” So, if the little flock swears by God that they will not take the mark of the beast, they are creating a commandment to themselves, the sin nature revives, and they are more likely to take the mark of the beast than if they never swore that they would not take the mark of the beast. Therefore, “above all things,” James says, do not swear an oath, “lest ye fall into condemnation” (5:12). The little flock should quietly obey God’s Word and go about their business.

Another reason that believing Israel is told not to swear at this time is because that is what apostate Israel will be doing. Isaiah 48:1-2 says that those “which are called by the name of Israel,” which makes them apostate Israel, will “swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.” “They call themselves of the holy city,” but they are not. We know this refers to the tribulation period because God says that He will refine them “in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10), which is the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2-4). Therefore, apostate Israel swears by God’s name in the tribulation period, and they do not perform their oaths. Believing Israel is told to “come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins” (Revelation 18:4). So that unbelievers see the difference between the two groups, God tells believing Israel not to swear an oath during the tribulation period.

5:13 Affliction comes by choosing not to sin. James just told Israel that in 5:10. They can also see this in their example of Job (Job 36:15,21). When members of the little flock are afflicted, they need to “pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). Therefore, prayer is necessary to endure affliction unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 24:13).

5:14-15 There is a lot made out of these verses today, especially by the Pentecostal church, as they claim physical healings are for today. Churches will have elders gather around sick folks, anoint them with oil, and pray for God to perform miraculous, physical healings. Then, if they get just a little better, they claim God has healed them. These verses, however, apply to the little flock in the tribulation period, and not to us today.

Moreover, the most important aspect of the healing is spiritual, not physical. 5:15 says that “the prayer of faith shall SAVE the sick.” It does not say that it will HEAL the sick. Thus, the prayer of faith is like Jesus praying for Peter that, when Satan wanted to sift him as wheat, Jesus prayed “that [his] faith fail not.” Jesus then said, “and WHEN thou art converted” (Luke 22:31-32). Jesus did not say, “IF thou art converted,” because he knew that the prayer of faith SHALL save the spiritually sick. James 5:15 goes on to say that, “if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him,” which shows James’ emphasis is really upon the spiritual healing.

Jesus went through a period of 40 days without eating (Matthew 4:2) so that He learned that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). That is the lesson that the little flock is

supposed to learn in the tribulation period. God allows them to go without food during that time (Revelation 13:17), because they will not have the faith to cast out the mountain of religion in their lives “but by prayer and fasting” (Matthew 17:16-20). Believing Gentiles will give them food to eat at times (Matthew 25:35), but “the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12), especially toward the end of the tribulation period. Now, God does promise to take care of the little flock physically (Matthew 6:26), but His more important promise to them is to take care of them spiritually (Matthew 6:25).

A good example of this is the man sick of the palsy. “And Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matthew 9:2). Although he came for a physical healing, Jesus took care of his greater need first, which was a spiritual one. He then healed him physically, as well (Matthew 9:6), but the more important healing was the spiritual one. So, too, in the tribulation period, the elders will pray for those in unbelief so that they may believe God, rather than the Antichrist, so that they are healed spiritually. They will also be healed physically, as the way to confirm that the gospel of the kingdom is true, as Mark 16:20 says.

The reason the elders are to be called upon is because they have faith in advanced, kingdom doctrine so that the people are healed. At the same time, the people themselves show a faith in the gospel of the kingdom by their very act of going to the elders for healing, rather than going to apostate Israel under the Antichrist. Therefore, their sins are forgiven them when they trust in God through the faith of the elders. The physical healings are also demonstrations to unbelievers in their midst so that they may believe the gospel of the kingdom, as well, since “the Jews require a sign” (I Corinthians 1:22). Thus, we see three groups of people in the little flock, all differentiated by their level of faith. I John 2:12-14 names these three groups: 1) Fathers, 2) Young men, and 3) Little children. In the context of James, the fathers would be the elders, the young men would be those going to the elders for healing, and the little children would be unbelievers who see the physical healings and believe in the gospel of the kingdom, as a result.

Since the physical healings are demonstrations of what is going on spiritually, the elders are told to use physical oil as a demonstration of the spiritual oil that God is applying. Thus, the anointing oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, as seen in I Samuel 16:13, because the Holy Spirit is to come upon them when they repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38). The physical healings, then, are also done by anointing with oil (Mark 6:12-13) so that those healed physically will have a type of what happens to them spiritually when they believe the gospel. But, again, the more important anointing is the spiritual anointing. This is seen in the famous passage of Psalm 23:5, which says that “THOU anointest my head with oil,” which means that God is giving believing Israel the Holy Ghost since God is the One doing the anointing, not man.

Note also from 5:15 that the elders are the ones with faith to heal the people, not the people themselves. This is important to note because Pentecostals will claim that, if a person is not healed, it is because the person praying did not have

enough faith. Another excuse used is that it was not God's will to heal them, but yet 5:15 says that the prayer of faith SHALL save the sick. The healing will take place in every case, just like when the great multitudes followed Jesus, "and He healed them ALL" (Matthew 12:15).

I personally know of a couple, who let their son get worse and worse physically. They did not take him to the doctor, because that would be acting out of unbelief. Instead, they prayed for his physical healing and had the elders of the church anoint him with oil and pray over him many times. His parents must have had great faith, since they staked their son's life on their faith, yet he was not healed. He ended up dying at an early age, as a result. This example of physical death shows just how dangerous it is to try to apply physical healing passages to us today.

The reason God does not physically heal people today is because we already have the Holy Spirit given unto us (I Thessalonians 4:8). Colossians 2:17 says that the things of the old covenant of Israel "are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Since today, in the dispensation of grace, we are the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27), we should not go back to the shadow by pursuing physical healings when we have already been spiritually healed to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). There is no greater healing than that!

5:16 The faults of Israel will be primarily to trust in the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, rather than in God's Word to them for the tribulation period. If they confess their faults one to another, those with faith can show them scripture and pray for them to understand that scripture so that they may be healed spiritually (5:16). Those healed are then spiritually well so that they can go the lost sheep of the house of Israel and perform the signs of the kingdom so that others may believe and be saved, as well (Matthew 10:6-8).

Note, from Matthew 10:1, that Jesus gave His disciples power "to heal ALL manner of sickness and ALL manner of disease." They went out and did this successfully. Then, in Matthew 16:21, Jesus "BEGAN...to show unto His disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." But, they did not believe Him. Therefore, they were in unbelief, which is why they were unable to cast out the lunatick devil in Matthew 17:14-16. Jesus said that "THIS KIND goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). The reason they were not able to cast out the devil was because they had the fault of a lack of belief in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and that it will take the fasting and prayer of the tribulation period, before believing Israel will believe God's Word to them above all the lies of the enemy found in the Babylonian religious system propagated by apostate Israel.

Now, let's go back to James. In 5:13-15, we have members of the little flock, who have so stubbornly held onto religion, that they are spiritually sick. The little flock needs to confess their faults to one another so that they will be healed spiritually so that they have the prayer of faith to help unbelievers, unlike the 12 disciples,

who could not help the boy with a lunatick devil. Thus, by confessing their faults to each other, they learn faith in God's Word so that their prayers are righteous so that they can spiritually heal those coming to them. That is why they are told that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (5:16).

5:17-18 Jesus said that complete faith in God would give the little flock the power to command a mountain to be removed and cast into the sea, and it would happen (Matthew 17:20). What He meant by that was that God would not work through them until they believe God and His Word over what man and religion says about God. Elias, or Elijah, is an example of this. He prayed for no rain, and it did not rain. Then, he prayed for rain, and it rained. The first time Elijah is mentioned in the Bible is I Kings 17:1, where he makes the proclamation that "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." In other words, God did not work through Elijah until he trusted God's Word over religion. Then, God started doing mighty things through him. Similarly, the little flock in the tribulation period are "subject to like passions" (5:17), but, when they allow faith to overcome passion, the result is that God does mighty things through them to save the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as God did with Elijah.

Note that, when Elijah stopped the rain, "it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months" (5:17). The first 3 ½ years of the tribulation period will have God's two witnesses prophesying against apostate Israel and building up a believing remnant of at least 144,000 Jews, who will be sealed by God for the last half of the tribulation period (Revelation 11:3, 7:3-8). Halfway through the tribulation period, it will rain again, and the earth will bring forth her fruit (5:18). So, 3 ½ years of prophecy will be followed by the 3 ½-year ultimatum of the Antichrist in the Great Tribulation that those, who do not take the mark of the beast, will be killed. The 3 ½ years of prophecy can be likened to the famine, and the Great Tribulation can be likened to the rain bringing forth fruit—all in a spiritual sense.

When Elijah shut the heaven for 3 ½ years, he did not just do some neat magic trick, but the famine's purpose was so that, when the rain came, the earth finally yielded fruit. Thus, shortly after the great rain came (I Kings 18:45), we see God saying that He has reserved "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (I Kings 19:17). Similarly, the 3 ½ years of the first part of the tribulation period will produce 144,000 Jews, who will not take the mark of the beast nor worship his image. Thus, the spiritual famine in the land will produce spiritual fruit that will manifest itself in the Great Tribulation period by those not worshipping the image of the beast. The application, then, is for the little flock, who were saved due to the famine, to go "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:6). They are to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matthew 10:8) as signs to confirm the word of the gospel that they preach (Mark 16:15-16,20). In doing this, they will be saying to the mountain of religion, "Remove hence to yonder place" (Matthew 17:20), so that unbelievers may be saved. But, the little flock MUST have this mountain removed in their own hearts FIRST before they can

help remove it from the hearts of others in Israel so that they will believe the gospel of the kingdom and be saved, as well.

It will take a physical famine of 3 ½ years to yield the spiritual bounty of belief in the hearts of the little flock. Thus, we see the spiritual maturity needed to pray for the right thing. Elijah was so desirous that Israel would be saved that he prayed for a “sore famine” (I Kings 18:2) that would lead to their belief. II Corinthians 12:9-10 says that physical infirmities cause believers to be spiritually strong. Most people think the opposite to be the case. They think that they must be in the will of God if God is blessing them materially. That is why Romans 8:26 says “we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” Although Elijah was “subject to like passions as we are” (5:17), he set aside his flesh and “prayed earnestly that it might not rain” (5:17), knowing that a famine would cause Israel to do some self-examination and start trusting in God. Similarly, the little flock will need to have faith in kingdom doctrine to overcome the flesh to pray for physical infirmities to come upon Israel so that they might believe the gospel and enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth.

5:19-20 So, if a believer errs from the truth, he is in danger of not being saved. Therefore, correcting him back to the truth “shall save a soul from death” (5:20). Note that the issue is erring from the truth. The issue is NOT how many sins a person has committed. Thus, the elders’ job is to make sure the little flock believes the gospel of the kingdom over the lies of the Antichrist. It is not to keep a tally of how many sins they have committed and try to stop their sins. Their focus is to be on the truth of God’s Word, rather than on trying to hide the performance of the sin nature.

When a person believes the gospel of the kingdom, he can then show the love of God to unbelieving Israel by preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing the sick, and casting out devils. Others will then be saved, thereby hiding “a multitude of sins” (5:20). That is why I Peter 4:8 says that “charity,” and not an attempt to adhere strictly to the law, “shall cover the multitude of sins.”

Thus, James ends the book, showing that the trials of the tribulation period work faith in believers so that they will go out to unbelieving Israel and see them saved, as well. Thus, the perfect work of patience (1:4), that comes out of the “divers temptations” of the tribulation period (1:2-3) that he began the book with, is fully explained by the time Israel reaches the end of the book.

I Peter Introduction

Much like Ephesians gives advanced doctrine for those today who already know Romans doctrine, **I Peter** gives advanced doctrine for those in Israel in the tribulation period who already understand Hebrews doctrine. I Peter 1 deals with the blessings they have in Christ, and those blessings come about through the trial of their faith (1:7), making them holy (1:15-16). Chapter 2 shows that they have moved from not being God's people (2:10; Hosea 1:9-11) to being God's "royal priesthood, an holy nation" (2:9) to reconcile the Gentiles back to God in God's eternal kingdom on earth. Chapter 3 tells the believing remnant of Israel to live godly lives, even though they will suffer persecution for doing so (3:16-17), as did Christ (3:18) and Noah (3:20-21), who is a type of the believing remnant of Israel enduring the tribulation period. Chapter 4 tells Israel to think like Christ did, which means being willing to suffer for Christ's sake. Chapter 5 tells the elders to hold fast to sound doctrine, lest Satan devour the little flock.

Summary: Israel is encouraged to endure the tribulation period so that they may fulfill their calling of being God's priests to the Gentiles in God's eternal kingdom on earth (2:5-10).

Key passage: 2:9-10 (9) But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

1 Peter writes to scattered Israel in the tribulation period (v. 1). The Godhead has saved them (v. 2) and will reward them in God's kingdom (vs. 3-4). In the meantime, their faith will be tried (vs. 6-7), but they can endure unto the end of the tribulation period by the power of God (v. 5), which is the Holy Ghost (v. 12), enabling them to obey God's commandments to them (v. 22) so that they are holy like God (vs. 15-16), which will show apostate Israel that their religion is vain (v. 18). Instead of religion, apostate Israel needs the precious blood of Christ (v. 19) so that they will be born again by the Word of God and live forever in the kingdom (vs. 23-25).

1:1 Like James, I Peter is written to the Jews scattered abroad. They are scattered among the Gentiles as part of God's fifth cycle of chastisement of them for disobeying their law covenant with God (Leviticus 26:33). I Peter is written to the Jews, who are still under the Mosaic law covenant with God, according to Hebrews 8:13. The law did not go away with the coming of Jesus. Jesus said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18), and that "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Therefore, I Peter is written to the Jews under the law, but it is a new phase of being under the law, due to the blood sacrifice that the Lord Jesus Christ has already given for Israel's atonement under the law. It is a new phase because they now have the Holy Spirit to guide them. They are also close to

the tribulation period, which means that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2 and 4:17).

Also note that Peter calls saved Israel “strangers,” but Paul calls the body of Christ “saints” (Ephesians 1:1). That is because Israel does not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20), while the body of Christ already has received the atonement (Romans 5:11).

1:2 Red flags are thrown up whenever the word “elect” appears in the Bible. That is because Calvinists have defined the term to mean that God chooses who will have eternal life, taking away the free will of man. However, if we just let the Bible define the term for us, we will see that this definition of “elect” is incorrect. This verse says that Israel is “elect according to the foreknowledge of God.” It does NOT say that Israel is elect according to the WILL of God. This means that God does not force people to be saved. Rather, God’s sovereignty enables Him to know beforehand what the free-will decisions of man will be.

Two passages of scripture explain this. 1) II Peter 1:10 tells believing Israel to “give diligence to make your calling and election sure.” If election means there are no free-will decisions on the part of man, then there is nothing that believing Israel can do to make their election sure. It would already be sure, since God elected them to be saved. 2) Romans 8:29-30 says, “for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate....Them He also called,...them He also justified: and...them He also glorified.” This shows that the process of justification starts with God’s foreknowledge of man’s free-will decisions, and not God’s sovereign forcing of man to be saved.

Two examples of Biblical election should also help. 1) Matthew 22:14 says, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” This statement is based upon the information in Matthew 22:11-13. There, we learn that a man was kicked out of the marriage supper of the Lamb for coming in his own self-righteousness. This guy was “called,” but he was not “chosen.” If God, in His sovereignty, forces men to be saved, then all of those called would also be chosen. 2) After spending all night in prayer, Jesus chose 12 disciples (Luke 6:12-13). He did so, knowing that Judas Iscariot was “a devil” (John 6:70-71). Sure enough, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus, while the other 11 were faithful to Jesus through the early-Acts period. We see no Biblical record of Jesus forcing the 11 to remain faithful or Judas to betray Him. All 12 disciples made their own free-will decisions, as to what they would do. Yet, through the foreknowledge of God, Jesus knew what those decisions would be. Therefore, God has elected individuals to be saved, based upon their free-will decisions.

We see the whole Trinity at work in this verse to save Israel. First, God the Father had the plan of redemption. Second, the Holy Spirit set Israel apart to be a holy nation (2:9). That is what sanctification means in this context. It does not mean that Israel is holy at the time of the writing of I Peter, because they do not receive forgiveness of sins until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20). Also, according to this verse, the sanctification came BEFORE the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus

Christ” (1:2). We learned from Hebrews that the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ is the ratification of God’s new covenant with Israel (Hebrews 9:14-15). Therefore, what Peter is saying is that God the Father came up with the new covenant, the new covenant has been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and it has been ratified by Jesus Christ’s obedience to die on the cross and then sprinkle His blood as the sacrifice that guarantees the new covenant. All of Israel, who have faith in God’s promises, are the elect of God to be partakers of the new covenant to receive all of the blessings God has for them in God’s coming eternal kingdom on earth. It is because of the Trinity’s work in bringing about this new covenant with Israel that God gives believing Israel “grace” to endure faithful unto the end of the tribulation period, and they have “peace” with God for all eternity.

1:3 Note that the new covenant with Israel brings blessings to God the Father, because He has brought grace and peace through Jesus Christ so that God takes repossession of the earth (1:2-3). We see the same with the grace dispensation today, where God is blessed thanks to the grace and peace He gives the body of Christ through Jesus Christ so that God takes repossession of the heaven (II Corinthians 1:2-3). Therefore, God is blessed and man is blessed, all through Jesus Christ, regardless of dispensation. The instructions for the different dispensations are different, but both dispensations have God giving grace and peace to man and God being blessed as a result.

Note from 1:3 that Israel is begotten of God. This is them being “born again” (1:23; John 3:3). They are born of the Spirit (John 3:5) so that they may enter God’s kingdom, which is their “lively hope” (1:3). It is “lively” because God brought life from the dead when He resurrected Jesus Christ. Therefore, God has the power to raise Israel from the dead at Jesus’ second coming so that they live in the kingdom with God. The fact, that Israel must be begotten of God, shows that not all physical Jews will make it into the kingdom. They must have faith in God’s promises to them to be Christ’s seed so that they are born of God. Thus, not all that are called “Israel” are Israel (Romans 2:28-29).

1:4 This is a key verse for the tribulation saints to keep in mind. Apostate Israel will get an inheritance from the Antichrist, but it is corruptible, defiled by sin, and will fade away. Believing Israel, however, can keep faith in God, knowing that their inheritance will never fade away. They also do not have to worry about the Antichrist defiling it or corrupting it, because it is “reserved in heaven for” them (1:4).

Because their inheritance is in heaven, Christians say that God will not have His kingdom on earth. However, Revelation 21:1-2 says that the New Jerusalem will come “down from God out of heaven.” Because Satan is “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4), all treasures on this earth will be corrupted by Satan’s forces. Therefore, Jesus told His disciples, “lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20), and those treasures will be part of the New Jerusalem that comes down to earth for God’s eternal, earthly kingdom. Therefore, believing Israel can survive persecution from the Antichrist and apostate Israel, knowing that their eternal reward cannot

be diminished or taken away by Satan's forces. Similarly, today, in the mystery dispensation, we can serve Christ, knowing that we have a hope laid up for us in heaven (Colossians 1:5).

1:5 Not only is believing Israel's reward kept undefiled in heaven for them, but they themselves are also kept undefiled, even though they are living in a defiled world. "The power of God" is the gospel (Romans 1:16), as seen in Jesus' death on the cross. His death gave Him power over Satan's forces. Thus, when the Antichrist tries to steal believing Israel from God, he cannot do so, because Jesus' death on the cross overcame the power that sin had on believers' lives. Believers have access to that power by the faith that they place in God's promises to them. Therefore, the power of God, and faith in that power, lead to their salvation.

Unlike us today, Israel is not saved at the moment of belief, because they are justified by faith plus works (James 2:24). They must endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22). Therefore, they receive salvation at Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-21). That is "the last time" in which their salvation is revealed (1:5,9). Until that time, God keeps them safe by His power (John 10:28-29) and their faith (John 15:5-6). Since the body of Christ already has the atonement now (Romans 5:11), we are kept, not by a continuance in faith, but by the seal of the Holy Spirit. He is the down payment of our inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14), while Israel has to wait for their inheritance, since it is reserved in heaven for them (1:4).

1:6-7 Of course, there is great rejoicing for the little flock in their reward of eternal life. But, in the meantime, they must suffer through the tribulation period (1:6). The reason they must suffer is so that their faith may be tried with fire so that it becomes pure and precious so that it does not perish. The Lord sits as a refiner of Israel in the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2-3) so that their impurities (that is, their trusting in the flesh) will be done away with so that they come forth as gold (Job 23:10).

For example, Paul says that he takes pleasure in trials because those trials make his flesh weak, thereby making Christ strong through him (II Corinthians 12:10). Similarly, when believing Israel goes through the tribulation period, their trials force them to make the decision to trust in God over their own flesh. This increased faith, then, brings praise, honour, and glory to God when it is revealed at Jesus' second coming (1:7). Thus, the tribulation period helps Israel increase their faith, and it also brings glory to God.

1:11 mentions "the sufferings of Christ" (His first coming), "and the glory that should follow" (His second coming). 4:13 says that the little flock will be partakers of Christ's glory to come if they are also partakers of Christ's sufferings. A servant (the little flock) is not above his master (Christ) (Matthew 10:24). Therefore, believing Israel should EXPECT that they would suffer in the tribulation period before receiving glory in the kingdom.

1:8 The people, Peter wrote to, were alive at Jesus' first coming. Although they were scattered among the Gentiles (1:1), they did come to Jerusalem, three times per year for the feast days, as we see them doing in Acts 2:8-11, as required of them in the Mosaic law (Exodus 23:14-17). Jesus did the same. His ministry was in Galilee, and He went to Jerusalem three times per year for the feasts. Therefore, it is likely that Peter's audience did see Jesus in the flesh. Therefore, when Peter says "Whom having not seen" (1:8), he is not talking about just seeing Jesus in the flesh. Rather, he is talking about seeing Jesus Christ in all His glory at His second coming (1:7), which makes sense, since 1:7 concludes with a colon, indicating that 1:8 explains what was just mentioned in 1:7.

Then, the phrase, "though now ye see Him not" (1:8), shows that Peter's audience is in the tribulation period, where they see the Antichrist's kingdom, rather than the true Christ's kingdom. So, believing Israel has never seen Christ's kingdom on earth (only Peter, James, and John saw Christ's kingdom before they died, when they were on the mount of transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1-6 and II Peter 1:16-18)). During the tribulation period, they see the opposite power (Satan) ruling at the height of his kingdom. Yet, they choose to love Christ to the point of suffering for Him, and they rejoice with unspeakable joy over the glory that they will receive in the future. That is a great definition of faith. It is one that we can emulate in today's mystery dispensation, walking by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). This is important to understand because faith is what pleases God (Hebrews 11:6), which is why God requires us to believe the gospel before we actually see God's eternal kingdom.

The joy of faith certainly is "unspeakable," because: 1) It cannot be described, and 2) It cannot be understood by unbelievers, because they do not see God's kingdom afar off (Hebrews 11:13), as believers do. This joy is also "full of glory" (1:8) because the joy comes from God, and not from the things of this world, since the things of this world have no glory, not having been made by God. Joy is internal in the inner man, when believers see who they are in Christ. Then, when Christ lives in them (Galatians 2:20), they yield their bodies to God's use (Romans 12:1), which produces glory (II Corinthians 4:7), which is external.

For the tribulation saints, their faith results in them keeping God's commandments, and it is the keeping of His commandments that brings them joy (John 15:10-11).

1:9 This verse, along with Acts 3:19-20, is the proof text that saved Israel does not receive forgiveness of sins until the new covenant is applied to them, which is at Jesus' second coming (Jeremiah 31:34). Although Israel does not receive their salvation until Jesus' second coming (Acts 3:19-20), they do receive, in the tribulation period, the unspeakable joy that comes from that future salvation, because they see the salvation of their souls through the eyes of faith.

1:10-12 There is a dangerous heresy, that most Christians believe, that there has only been one saving gospel across all dispensations, and that gospel is to trust in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sins (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

However, according to Galatians 1:11-12 and Romans 16:25-26, that gospel was not revealed to mankind until the Lord revealed it to the apostle Paul in Acts 9, which is why Paul calls it “my gospel.” Even Jesus’ 12 apostles did not know Paul’s gospel. We know this because Matthew 10:7 says that they preached the gospel, and Jesus did not begin to tell them of His impending death until Matthew 16:21. Therefore, the gospel they preached could not have been to trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection, because, to this, Peter said, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee” (Matthew 16:22). He did not say, “DUH! We have been preaching Your death, burial, and resurrection for over 2 years now. Tell me something I do not know!”

From 1:10-12, we see that even God’s prophets, the most knowledgeable people in the Old Testament of God’s plans for the nation of Israel, could not figure out Christ’s sufferings and His glory to follow. Those were the most faithful men of the Old Testament, which is why God revealed to them what little He did, because they inquired about God’s redemptive plan for Israel. They inquired, God revealed things to them, and they “searched diligently” the scriptures revealed to others. This method garnered Daniel special knowledge of end-time events that he could not reveal to anyone, but he still did not receive knowledge of how God would give salvation to Israel. He was told that “knowledge shall be increased” at “the time of the end” (Daniel 10:4). Therefore, even the most faithful men in the Old Testament could not figure out “what” God would do to accomplish salvation, or “what manner of time” He would do it in (1:11).

They knew that God would give grace to Israel (1:10). They knew there would be a separation in Israel between believers and unbelievers (Deuteronomy 32:21). They knew this separation would be accomplished through Christ’s suffering (Isaiah 53:4-8). They knew that God would bring believers into the kingdom. However, they had no idea how all of this would be accomplished through Christ’s suffering. God told them that the complete picture would not be revealed until after the Christ had come. Their job was not to understand it. Their job was to write down a part of God’s plan so that those, who would come later, could take that part and add it to the part revealed to Israel in the New Testament (all of the New Testament, except for Paul’s epistles), so that they would get the complete picture. Therefore, the “joy unspeakable” (1:8) was not available to Israel until the time of the New Testament writings to Israel. If the entire redemption plan was revealed in the Old Testament, Satan’s forces would not have had Jesus crucified (I Corinthians 2:7-8). So, the joy could only come after the cross, just like the glory would only come after the cross (1:11).

That is why Hebrews 9:8 says that “the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.” In other words, before the cross, no man ever understood that the Christ would make the way to the Father by offering His perfect blood in the holy of holies in heaven as the atoning blood for Israel’s sins (Hebrews 9:24-28). That is why Thomas said to Jesus, “How can we know the way?” (John 14:5).

The point, then, to Peter's audience is that, while they may have to endure greater tribulations than any other believers have had to go through, they also have more joy from more knowledge of God's plan than any other believers in Israel's program have had. However, it is important to note that the Old Testament did reveal that the Christ would have to suffer before receiving glory. Therefore, Israel should have been looking for a suffering Messiah when Jesus came. It was only because they were following their own religious beliefs and traditions that they looked for the glory without the suffering. (This shows how important it is to rightly divide the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15), since, today, Christian churches look for God to do things He is not doing right now. Therefore, they add works to the gospel and are not saved, and/or they look for God to perform physical miracles, when God is concentrating on the spiritual realm today.)

Finally, we should note that, even in Peter's day, when God had revealed His entire, redemptive plan in Israel's program, the angels still did not understand it ("which things the angels desire to look into" (1:12)). That is because the things of God are communicated to man's spirit by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:9-13). Because the angels are not given that knowledge by the Holy Spirit, they cannot understand God's redemptive plan for Israel in the future, even through they desire to look into these things (1:12). (To understand this, you can compare the angels' situation to gender issues. Men cannot understand how women's minds work, and women cannot understand how men's minds work, because each one has different minds. Similarly, angels have different minds than saved people, who have "the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16).) This shows that believing Israel, in the tribulation period, is not so bad off after all. Physically, they may be hurting, but, spiritually, they are doing better than believers in Israel's program in the past and better than God's angels in the future.

I have heard people say that they wish they could have been alive when Jesus was on earth so that they could see the miracles He performed. However, the disciples knew nothing about the cross. It is actually better to be alive right now without these physical miracles, because we have God's completed Word and we have the Holy Spirit to teach us the things of God. Therefore, we have "ALL the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3) in Christ, which is far better than seeing a lame man walk, since the spiritual is far better than the physical.

1:13 Since the little flock, after the cross, has been given greater spiritual help than any previous generation of Jews, they should take advantage of that help by using the Holy Ghost's revelations to them (1:12) in order to continue to have faith in God's promises to them unto the end of the tribulation period. They are told, here, to set aside their emotions and think on the things of God.

Three times in this epistle (1:13, 4:7, and 5:8), Peter tells them to "be sober," meaning that they should act based on faith in God's Word, rather than based on their own emotions. Peter is a great example of someone, who made such a transformation, going from the emotional Peter seen in Matthew – John, who was always sticking his foot in his mouth, to being the spiritual leader of Israel's program in Acts 1-7. Since Peter can overcome his emotions through God's Word,

the little flock, in the tribulation period, can overcome their emotions, also. This is how they are “overcomers” of Satan (Revelation 2:7,11,17,26, and 3:5,12,21).

“The revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:13) would be when He reveals their salvation to them, which takes place “at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7). If they “gird up the loins of” their minds (1:13) by believing kingdom doctrine, then they will not be swayed by the emotionalism of the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Instead, they will patiently wait for the hope of eternal life in the kingdom to be graciously revealed to them by Jesus Christ at His second coming.

1:14 Today, in the dispensation of grace, we are already adult sons of God (Galatians 4:7), because we have already received the atonement (Romans 5:11). However, Israel does not receive their justification until Jesus’ second coming (Acts 3:19-20); therefore, they are children. This is seen in Revelation 7:4, where they are still called “children” halfway through the tribulation period, but they are called sons of God in Revelation 21:7 after they overcome the Antichrist and enter God’s eternal kingdom on earth. Therefore, Israel is under the schoolmaster of the law during the tribulation period (Galatians 3:24). This means that they should be “obedient children” (1:14). Before receiving the gospel by the Holy Ghost (1:12), they were ignorant of the things of God, being stuck in the mire of their own religion. Now that they have faith in God, they are not ignorant. Therefore, they should obey God’s commands, rather than continuing in the lusts of unbelief.

1:15-16 Because the body of Christ has already received the atonement today, we are also already holy (Colossians 3:12), while saved Israel is called to be holy. “Be ye holy; for I am holy” is what God spoke to Israel in Leviticus 11:44. By bringing this up, here, Peter shows that believing Israel is still under the old covenant (Hebrews 8:13). The context, in Leviticus, was not defiling themselves with unclean beasts. The context in I Peter is similar in that they are not to defile themselves with the world, and religious people are actually called “brute beasts” in II Peter 2:12 and Jude 10.

Apostate Israel will follow the Babylonian religion of the Antichrist. The call is for believing Israel to set aside their emotions and believe the Word of God, such that they obey God’s law covenant with them instead of defiling themselves with the religion of the world. This is what is meant by “be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1:15), since conversation refers to their lifestyles, rather than to merely speaking with people. Therefore, in everything they do, they are to be an example of “an holy nation, a peculiar people” (2:9) to the apostate nation so that they may believe.

1:17 The reason they should live holy lives is because God will judge apostate Israel to the lake of fire if they do not follow the faith example of believing Israel and believe themselves. The middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is back up during the tribulation period. Israel has their favored nation status with God once again. However, when it comes to God’s judgment, He will not have respect of persons. If Israel does not believe, they cannot get into God’s kingdom just because they are physical Jews.

Rather, God will judge all unbelievers according to their works (1:17 and Romans 2:5-6). This is a reference to the Great White Throne Judgment when all those judged by works will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:13-15) (The possible exception to this is Jesus Christ, Who will be given eternal life, IF He is judged at that time.). The idea, then, is that believing Israel had better show their belief to apostate Israel by living holy lives. Otherwise, apostate Israel will think they can make it into God's kingdom, simply because they are Jews, because they see no difference between how they live and how believing Israel lives. Then, because of their unbelief, God will judge them into the lake of fire.

Seeing then, that their lifestyles make a difference to apostate Israel, believing Israel should "pass the time of [their] sojourning here in fear" (1:17). Note that they are called sojourners, like Abraham was (Hebrews 11:9). They have already been "redeemed" (1:18) by "the precious blood of Christ" (1:19), but they remain on earth as sojourners so that they may be purified and others in Israel may be saved. The "fear" that they are to have is the fear of the Lord. This fear is called "the beginning of wisdom" in Proverbs 9:10. Hebrews 12:28 says that, once they believe, this "godly fear" will cause them to have grace upon apostate Israel. After all, apostate Israel was in the same position as the little flock before they believed. Therefore, godly fear will cause believing Israel to be obedient children of God so that others may be saved.

1:18-19 Unbelieving Israel thinks that they will be part of God's kingdom because of their religion. They will bow down to idols of gold and silver in the Antichrist's kingdom (Revelation 9:20), and they will follow the tradition of the fathers. 1:18 says that Israel is not redeemed by these Satanic idols in the Antichrist's kingdom. Rather, they are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ" (1:19). This shows that Christ's blood is much more precious than gold and silver! So then, why would believing Israel follow the religion of apostate Israel, when salvation is found in the gospel revealed by the Holy Ghost (1:12) and the commandments of God, rather than in the Jewish traditions?

This is the same question that Paul asked the Colossians: "Why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances ..., which all are to perish?" (Colossians 2:20, 22). Jesus also scolded the Jewish religious leaders of His day for rejecting the commandments of God in order to keep their own traditions (Mark 7:9). Since Israel is redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ" (1:19), they should be following Christ's commands, and not the Jewish traditions. Note that 1:18 calls the lifestyle, that is lived after the tradition of their fathers, "vain conversation." By contrast, living a life in obedience to God's commands is a "holy ... conversation" (1:15).

The mention, in 1:19, of Christ's blood being "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," tells Israel that Christ's blood meets the requirement under God's law of an acceptable sacrifice (Hebrews 9:22-28). The Passover lamb had to be without blemish (Exodus 12:5). As such, John referred to Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). This is why it is of the

primary importance that Jesus Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). If Jesus had told just one, little, white lie or had just one thought of hatred of someone without a cause, He would have had a spot on His life, meaning that His death on the cross would have paid for His Own sin, rather than for our sin. All mankind would then spend eternity in the lake of fire. Since Christ’s blood is the only blood that is pure and free from sin, it is the only substitutionary blood that God will accept as payment for our sins, which is why Peter describes His blood as being “precious.”

1:20 God looks at Jesus as being “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1:20) to die on a cross. Because God is outside of time, He also sees Christ as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). In time, however, it was not until Matthew 16:21 that “from that time forth BEGAN Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.” These were things that had “been kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:35). The disciples failed to understand these things until after Jesus’ resurrection (John 20:9). The reason that God waited more than 4,000 years before revealing His redemption plan is because, if Satan’s forces knew God’s plan, they would not have had Jesus Christ crucified (I Corinthians 2:7-8). Therefore, Jesus Christ was “foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1:20) to die on a cross, but, as mentioned in 1:10-12, the specifics of God’s redemption plan were not understood by anyone outside of the Godhead until after Jesus’ resurrection.

1:21 Believing Israel believes in God by Christ (1:21). In other words, Christ conquered death when He died as the perfect sacrifice for man’s sins. This enabled God to pour out His “spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28) so that they can obey God’s commands in the tribulation period, so that believing Israel’s “faith and hope might be in God” (1:21), rather than in man. During the tribulation period, apostate Israel will make their boast of God in their performance of the law (Romans 2:17). In doing so, they blaspheme God’s name (Romans 2:23-24). By contrast, the little flock will believe God and His Word, making their boast “in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14), which makes them “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16). However, without the Holy Ghost’s help, believing Israel would not be able to obey God and endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved. And, the Holy Ghost would not be there to help Israel if Christ had not defeated sin through His death, burial, and resurrection. Therefore, Israel’s faith and hope are in God because He raised Christ from the dead.

1:22 Christians usually think of obedience as following the law. However, Romans 10:16 says that apostate Israel had not “obeyed THE GOSPEL” because they did not BELIEVE. Romans 6:17-18 calls belief an obedience of the gospel from the heart, which makes us free from sin. Therefore, the way that the little flock obeys the truth through the Spirit is by believing the gospel of the kingdom preached to them. As such, it is faith that purifies their souls, and not obedience of the ten commandments, because it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6).

Once they have faith in the gospel of the kingdom, the Holy Ghost is poured out on them (Acts 2:2-4) so that they can have “unfeigned love of the brethren” (1:22). Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Since both believing Israel and apostate Israel will be doing signs and wonders in the tribulation period (Cp. Matthew 7:22-23 with Mark 16:17-20), the way undecided Israel will be able to determine which group truly belongs to God is by their love for each other. Therefore, in order for Jews to join the little flock of believers, the believing remnant needs to see to it that they “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (1:22). Only believers can demonstrate the love of God to a dying world.

1:23 And, the only way Israel can have a pure heart is by “being born again” (1:23), which takes place by believing the gospel of the kingdom (1:25) and being water baptized (John 3:3-7). It is under the new covenant God makes with Israel that they have that pure heart (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Granted, the new covenant does not begin until Jesus’ second coming (see Hebrews 8:13 and Acts 3:19-20), but Israel has a taste of that new covenant when they obey the old covenant by the Spirit in the tribulation period.

Note also from 1:23 that Peter makes it clear that the new birth is a spiritual birth, not a physical one. That is what is meant by them being born of an incorruptible seed. That seed is Christ, as Galatians 3:16 says. 1:23 says that the seed is “the Word of God.” This refers both to the written Word of God and the living Word of God, Who is Christ. The Word and Christ are one and the same, as John 1:1,14 tells us. Israel is born again by God speaking them into existence. The power to do this comes from Christ’s conquering death. God’s Word “liveth and abideth for ever” (1:23). Psalm 119:89 says that the Lord’s Word is forever settled in heaven. Matthew 24:35 says that heaven and earth shall pass away, but God’s Word will not pass away. Since God speaks Israel into existence, making them “born again,” they will continue to survive as long as God’s Word survives. Since God’s Word “liveth and abideth for ever” (1:23), Israel can rest assured that they also will live forever, since they are sustained by God’s Word.

1:24 “All flesh is as grass” is the theme of the tribulation period. When John the Baptist came, he was told to cry: “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field” (Isaiah 40:6). In other words, the rise of the Antichrist is like the rise of grass. Once the sun is risen with a burning heat (James 1:11), the grass quickly withers. Similarly, once the “Sun of righteousness” (Malachi 4:2), the Lord Jesus Christ, comes back, the Antichrist and his kingdom will fall (Revelation 18:2). At Jesus’ coming, “all flesh” (1:24) will die because it stands on Satan, rather than on God’s Word. Note that this verse says “all FLESH;” therefore, it also includes the beast called the Antichrist. Therefore, all that is seen in the tribulation period will be replaced by the “things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3). In other words, Israel should stand on the Word of God to them so that they are born of an incorruptible seed and live forever, instead of being destroyed at Jesus’ second coming when all flesh withers away, not being born of God.

1:25 The gospel to Israel is to repent and be water baptized (Acts 2:38). Repentance means to change your mind. For Israel, this means to stop trusting in their own righteousness, as found in the Babylonian religious system of the Antichrist and apostate Israel, and start trusting in God's imputed righteousness to them by putting themselves back under God's law covenant with them. So, if the word of the Lord is preached to Israel by the gospel, "the word" must be to obey the truth by believing the gospel so that they may be holy as God is holy (1:16). This fits in with what Peter says in 1:17. God's Word endureth for ever (1:25), and Israel lives for ever because they are born of God's Word (1:23). Therefore, in the tribulation period, Israel might as well get started on eternity by being grounded in God's Word.

2 This chapter talks about the life that believing Israel should live in the tribulation period now that they have believed the gospel of the kingdom. First, they should desire to learn God's Word to them (v. 2), recognizing that God has chosen them to be part of His spiritual house (vs. 4-5). Jesus Christ is the chief corner stone of that house, but religious Israel rejected Him (vs. 6-8). Since believing Israel is part of God's spiritual house (vs. 9-10), they should live like Jesus did, obeying God and obeying the laws of the land (vs. 11-18). However, since the Antichrist will be ruling over them, they will suffer wrongfully if they obey God's laws (vs. 19-20). Again, they should look to Christ's example (vs. 21-24) and let Him shepherd their souls into the kingdom (v. 25). As such, they should endure the tribulation period patiently (v. 20), waiting for God's righteous judgment at Jesus' second coming (v. 23).

2:1 This chapter starts with "wherefore," which tells us that it is building on the last verse. Since "the word of the Lord endureth for ever" (1:25), the little flock should not resort to the tricks of apostate Israel. Apostate Israel will use "the slight of men, and cunning craftiness" to deceive Israel into believing false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14). Such tactics build up followers quickly. However, quickness is not an issue for the little flock, because the word of the Lord endureth for ever. Therefore, they can just speak "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15) and wait for the fruit of belief to come forth, whenever it does. Since only the word of God enables the little flock to live holy lives (1:22,16), they should go ahead and live holy lives so that others in Israel may also believe the gospel.

2:2 Spiritual growth occurs by feasting on "the sincere milk of the word" (2:2). Therefore, commentaries, Hebrew scholars, denominational teachings, philosophies, fables, etc. should ALL be discarded. After all, God has magnified His Word above all His name (Psalm 138:2). Why, then, would the little flock dilute His Word by turning to other sources? They should desire to learn the word of God to them so that they may serve God in the tribulation period.

The reason that the analogy is made to newborn babies is because the little flock is comprised of new believers. This is because all believers were raptured up at the end of the dispensation of grace, making the tribulation saints new believers.

2:3 Tasting that the Lord is gracious means that they have believed the gospel to them. This comes from Hebrews 6:4 saying that those “once enlightened...have tasted of the heavenly gift.” They were enlightened by “the true Light” (John 1:9), Jesus Christ. Thus, they have tasted and seen “that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8). Therefore, they have already, by faith, tasted the graciousness of the Lord in His being willing to forgive their sins, even though they deserved God’s judgment instead. They have also tasted the Lord’s graciousness in His pouring out the Holy Spirit upon them, Who enables them to understand God’s Word so that they may grow by it.

2:4-5 “To Whom coming” (2:4) means that believing Israel has come to Jesus Christ for salvation. He was “disallowed indeed of men” by the “builders” (2:7), who are apostate Israel, according to Matthew 21:42-45 and Acts 4:11. The Jewish religious leaders built THEIR house on shifting sand, rather than building GOD’S house on the Rock (Matthew 7:24-27), Who is Christ (I Corinthians 10:4). That is why God says that “their [apostate Israel’s] rock is not as our [believing Israel’s] Rock” (Deuteronomy 32:30-31).

God’s house is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20). That Ephesian passage goes on to say that believers “are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” (Ephesians 2:22). For the prophecy dispensation, Hebrews 3:6 says that Israel is God’s house, provided they have faith to endure unto the end.

Since Israel was apostate, they would not build God’s spiritual house, which means that God Himself has to build it. That is why God said, “the heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that ye build unto Me?” (Isaiah 66:1). The answer is that, because men are sinful, even if they did believe God and His Word, they still could not build a house for God. Therefore, “the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands” (Acts 7:48). Instead, God Himself must build His Own house. His house is faithful Israel, as He says in II Samuel 7:10: “I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.” So, man looks at faithful Israel and says, “You’re not part of our house because you have not aligned yourselves with us.” The Lord looks at them and says, “I will use these stones, i.e., believing Israel, to build My house,” because they are “lively stones” (2:5), due to their belief of the gospel. That is why John the Baptist said to apostate Israel, “God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Luke 3:8). Again, Jesus Christ said, “If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out” (Luke 19:40).

The way God builds His Own house is by Jesus Christ, as He said in Zechariah 6:12-13: “Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH.... He shall build the temple of the Lord.” This is Jesus Christ. As such, faithful Israel is “a spiritual house” (2:5), which is the perfect dwelling place for God, because “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). He can only dwell in faithful Israel, because they are holy. Therefore, God said, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1:16) so that God could dwell in them. Israel, then, in the millennial kingdom, is “an holy priesthood” (2:5), just like God called

them to be (Exodus 19:6 and Isaiah 61:6), so that God can dwell among men and still maintain His holiness, and so the Gentiles will have a mediator (Israel) between God and man by which the Gentiles can draw near to God as well. The spiritual sacrifices that they offer up to God, then, are the faith they have in God's Word to them, making them Melchizedekian priests to the Gentiles during the millennial kingdom (see Hebrews 7:21, Exodus 19:5-6, Isaiah 61:6, and Zechariah 8:23). Isaiah 61:6 calls them "Priests of the LORD" and "Ministers of our God." Note how both "Priests" and "Ministers" are capitalized. That is because they are of the heavenly, Melchizedekian priesthood, not the Levitical priesthood.

The "stones" of faith in God are "disallowed indeed of men" (2:4), because they exalt God, and not man. But, to God, they are lively. Note that 2:5 says that they are "AS lively stones." In other words, they are still dead, because they do not receive forgiveness of sins until Jesus' second coming. However, God treats them "as" if they are living, because they will become living when God raises them from the dead at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, He is already using them to build His spiritual house.

God chose Israel "to be a special people unto Himself, above all people" (Deuteronomy 7:6). Revelation 21:2 says that the "new Jerusalem" is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The next verse says that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3). The tabernacle of God's dwelling IS saved Israel. Now we know that Israel is "a special people unto" God by believing the gospel He gave them. This makes them God's spiritual house in the millennial kingdom, from which they can offer the spiritual sacrifices of believing God to the point of being His priests to the Gentiles.

2:6-8 So, believing Israel are stones in God's spiritual house for His kingdom on earth. Well, Christ is the same, except that He is the "chief corner stone" (2:6). Without Christ, the building would not stand because Israel would not be holy. That is what makes Christ the chief corner stone. The chief corner stone, Christ, is treated by man just like they treat saved Israel. "The builders," i.e., religious Israel, "disallowed" (2:7) Jesus as part of their building, just like they will disallow believing Israel by killing them (Matthew 10:21-22). The problem with disallowing Jesus is that, because He is the chief corner stone, religion's building will not stand without Him. Therefore, He is "a stone of stumbling" (2:8) to them, causing them to fall and their buildings to fall, so that they end up in the lake of fire. They "stumble at the word" (2:8), meaning that they stumble because they do not believe God's Word to them. But, since Jesus is the Word (John 1:1,14), that is why it can be said that they also stumble at Him.

The reasons, that Jesus is the living Word, are: 1) He is the perfect example of having faith in God, and 2) His faith makes His Word powerful, such that the Word of the gospel is not the gospel without Christ's faith in God. Just as believing Israel is chosen of God to be part of God's house, unbelieving Israel is appointed (2:8) to stumble over Christ and not be part of God's house. God did not predestinate some individuals to be in one group and some to be in another group, as we

learned in 1:2. Rather, those, who choose by their own free will to have faith, are chosen of God to be part of God's spiritual house.

The reason God laid in Sion a chief corner stone was so that Israel could be saved (Isaiah 28:16,18). If they believe, He is "precious" to them (2:7). If they do not believe, they will stumble over Him (2:8). Israel stumbled over Christ by crucifying Him, but that was not the end for Israel, as Romans 11:11 says, "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles." God set a stumbling stone in front of self-righteous Israel so that they would see that they need to believe the gospel and receive God's imputed righteousness to them in order to enter God's eternal kingdom on earth. The reason they were offended by Christ was because they walked by sight, judging Him to be an ordinary man (Matthew 11:5-6; 13:57; I Samuel 16:7; Isaiah 53:2). Therefore, they crucified Christ in ignorance (Acts 3:17).

However, God gave them a renewed opportunity not to fall by sending the Holy Ghost to them in Acts 1-7. But, when they rejected the Holy Ghost's ministry through the apostles, Jesus stood up (Acts 7:55-56) and judged them guilty (Isaiah 3:13). He set the prophecy program aside and started the dispensation of grace with Paul in Acts 9. At Jesus' second coming, He will give His final judgment of Israel in their program. If they are not believing in the gospel of the kingdom at that time, they will be ground to powder by the very Stone they crucified (Matthew 21:44).

2:9 The terms used, here, to describe believing Israel, are meant to set them apart from apostate Israel. Because believing Israel has faith in God's promises to them, they are stones that are part of God's building. Therefore, they are the things mentioned in this verse.

The "chosen generation" (2:9) applies to all believers in Israel throughout their history. By having faith in God, they are part of "the generation of Jesus Christ" (Matthew 1:1), rather than being part of the "generation of vipers" (Matthew 23:33), upon which will come judgment for shedding all the righteous blood upon the earth (Matthew 23:35), of which generation is apostate Israel.

They are also "a royal priesthood" (2:9). Believing Israel is not part of apostate Israel's priesthood that is under the Antichrist's religion, but they are God's priests (Isaiah 61:6), which makes them true royalty. Revelation 1:6, 5:10, and 20:6 all declare them to be priests unto God.

They are "an holy nation" (2:9). By this, God separates believing Israel from apostate Israel and shows that Israel must be "born again" (1:23) in order to enter God's kingdom. Those Jews, who do not believe in God's promises to them under the law covenant, will not make it into the kingdom. They will not be part of the holy nation of Israel.

Finally, believing Israel is "a peculiar people" (2:9) in that they are different from all other people in the world because their faith is not in the things of this world.

Therefore, in the tribulation period, while apostate Israel grabs all the money and power that they can and the rest of the world literally sells their souls to the devil by taking the mark of the beast so that they can survive physically, believing Israel takes no thought for their life (Matthew 6:25), endures persecution, and rejoices with unspeakable joy the whole time (1:8). This is very peculiar indeed! Behaving, in this manner, shows forth the praises of God (2:9), showing others that the way to rise out of Satan's kingdom is by having faith in what God will do for them.

Being "called...out of darkness into His marvelous light" (2:9) should remind us of John 3:19-21. That passage says that "light is come into the world" (John 3:19), meaning that Jesus Christ brought salvation through His perfect life and death on the cross. He then called Israel out of that darkness, and those "that doeth truth," i.e., believe the gospel of the kingdom, "cometh to the light" (John 3:21).

2:10 The phrases "time past" and "but now," as used here, are not used in the same way that Paul uses them in Ephesians 2. That is, they do not refer to a contrast between the prophecy and mystery programs. Rather, "time past" refers to when God gave up Israel over to Satan because of their unbelief. God says to Israel in Hosea 1:9 that "ye are not My people, and I will not be your God." Isaiah 49:24 says that Israel is Satan's "lawful captive." In Luke 4:5-6, Satan says he has power over all the kingdoms of the world, and Jesus does not dispute his statement. Isaiah 8:22 says that Israel sits in darkness. Therefore, Israel lost her identity as the people of God, because of their unbelief.

However, Hosea 1:10 speaks of a future time when Israel will be called "the sons of the living God." In Jeremiah 31:10-11, God promises to redeem Israel from the one stronger than her, i.e., Satan. In Matthew 12:28-29, we see Jesus saying that He did just that at His first coming. Psalm 68:18 says that God "hast led captivity captive," which Jesus did with His death. However, it also takes Israel's trust in God's law covenant with them in order for them to be saved, which is what happens in the tribulation period: "And so all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26). Therefore, Jesus' death won the victory over Satan, and the tribulation period stirs up Israel's faith in God's promises to them, such that Israel, which was, in time past, "not a people...,are now the people of God" (2:10).

Specifically, the people, who become the people of God, are the believing remnant of Israel. In Deuteronomy 32:21, God calls them "a foolish nation." This cannot be the body of Christ, because it is a nation, not nations. Also, God does not reckon the Jews among the Gentile nations (Numbers 23:9). Believing Israel is called "a foolish nation" because they are foolish in man's eyes. In other words, they believe the gospel of the kingdom, and such belief is foolish in the eyes of unbelieving Israel (see I Corinthians 1:18,25,27). Therefore, God's kingdom is taken from apostate Israel and given to "a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43). In Luke 12:32, Jesus Christ identifies this nation as the little flock.

The reason God says that they did not receive mercy before is because they were oppressed by the religious, apostate leaders of Israel. However, they receive mercy now because Jesus Christ will rule over them (see Jeremiah 23:1-6).

2:11 Believing Israel is called “beloved” here (2:11). In the Hebrew epistles, believing Israel is called “beloved” 22 times, and Christ is only called “beloved” once (II Peter 1:17). By contrast, in Song of Solomon, Christ is called “beloved” 33 times and His bride is called “beloved” only once (Song of Solomon 5:1). Jesus Christ is God’s beloved Son (Matthew 3:17). The reason that believing Israel is now beloved is because they are “accepted in the beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), and their lives are “hid with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Thus, they are transformed into being God’s beloved, due to Jesus’ perfect life and death on the cross.

Such a transformation means that Peter now beseeches them (2:11) not to sin, rather than commanding them not to sin. This is part of the post-cross relationship for all believers in both the prophecy and the mystery dispensations, as seen in the fact that the first time that believers are beseeched to do something is in Romans 12:1. This also shows that, in spite of being under God’s law covenant, believing Israel’s salvation is not based on them obeying the law.

In the meantime, they are still living in a world in which Satan is god (II Corinthians 4:4). Living in Satan’s world makes God’s people “strangers and pilgrims” (2:11). But, God’s mercy (2:10) gives them the opportunity to obey God’s commands instead of obeying their own “fleshly lusts” (2:11). It will not be easy to obey God, however, due to the internal war between their flesh and their soul.

2:12 In spite of having honest conversations among the Gentiles (2:12), the Gentiles will still speak against the believing remnant as evildoers. This is because, to the Gentiles, all Jews will look alike. Since most Jews will be apostate, they will speak “damnable heresies” and follow “pernicious ways” (II Peter 2:1-2). The Gentiles will then attribute the same qualities to the little flock of Israel. This is not unlike today, where those, who believe God and His Word, are evil spoken of, due to the unbelief, false doctrines, and immoral behavior of those who claim to be Christians.

The Gentiles will not notice the difference between apostate Israel and believing Israel until “the day of visitation.” This term is only found here and in Isaiah 10:3. Based upon Jeremiah 29:10 and Genesis 50:24, we learn that God’s visit is when He brings Israel into the Promised Land. So, in other words, God will allow apostate Israel and believing Israel to grow up together during the tribulation period. Then, Jesus will come back and separate the wheat from the tares (Matthew 13:27-30), allowing the Gentiles to see the difference between the two groups. They will then glorify God for the good works that believing Israel did in the midst of apostate Israel (Matthew 5:16). They will see Jesus Christ as the true God, which will then give them the chance to be saved at the end of the millennial kingdom. (In Israel’s program, the greatest time of Jewish salvation is at the end of the tribulation period, and the greatest time of Gentile salvation is at the end of the millennial reign.)

2:13-14 Considering that the Antichrist will be king in the tribulation period, submitting to him will not be easy to do. That does not mean they are to take the

mark of the beast. If the Antichrist sets a law that is contrary to God's law, the believing remnant is to obey God's law, because they "ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). However, in general, "rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil" (Romans 13:2). Therefore, Peter tells the little flock to obey rulers.

However, if the Antichrist sends governors unto the little flock to punish them as evildoers (2:14), they should follow Christ's example and not fight back. When the little flock appears before rulers, God will give them the words to say (Mark 13:11). This is how the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14), even though the little flock will not have gone over all the cities of Israel before Christ's second coming (Matthew 10:23). But, if the little flock fights, the Holy Ghost will not use them to preach the gospel to unbelievers.

Also, by loving their enemies, the little flock will show unbelievers that they are different, and maybe these unbelievers will believe the gospel, as a result. Jesus said that, "if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46). Unbelieving Israel will be confronted by the love of God coming to them through the little flock, and they will be forced to decide to believe the gospel of the kingdom or continue in their unbelief.

2:15 Also, if the little flock abstains "from fleshly lusts" (2:11), their accusers will have nothing bad to say about them. At the same time, the little flock will preach the gospel and perform the signs of the kingdom (Mark 16:15-20), which means that their accusers can only honestly have good things to say about them. Sure, they can bring them before their religious councils on some trumped-up charges and sentence them to death like apostate Israel did with Jesus and with Stephen. But, all this will do is show the evilness of Babylon, causing more people to believe the gospel that the little flock preached while on trial. Those, who refuse to believe in the light of innocent people being killed, show that they will look for every excuse possible not to believe God (Jeremiah 17:9), because believing God means that they are not righteous in themselves (Psalm 14:3), which very few people will ever wholeheartedly admit.

It may seem cruel for a loving God to allow His believers to be killed (Revelation 6:9), but that is when your perspective is only of the flesh. By contrast, when your perspective is God's eternal kingdom, it is God showing His love for mankind in allowing His people to be killed for His sake, since God wants all to come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). And, as far as those killed are concerned, their death is actually a blessing, because God will soon resurrect them from the dead at Jesus' second coming. So, they really only went to sleep (John 11:11-14), and they did not have to suffer through the rest of the tribulation period.

2:16 "As free" (2:16) means that believing Israel is free from bondage to sin, due to the cross work of Christ. This shows that they are saved by faith, not by the law (Galatians 2:16). Before believing the gospel, they could do nothing but sin (Romans 6:17 and 7:18). Now, they have a choice to either go back to serving sin or go forward "as the servants of God" (2:16). Unfortunately, because they still have their vile flesh (Philippians 3:21), they can cloak themselves in maliciousness,

meaning that they can choose to harm others intentionally. They would do this by taking on the name of Jesus and following the lusts of their own flesh. Such action is often seen in Christianity today by the fleshly actions of self-proclaimed Christians.

2:17 By my count, this verse has more sentences in it than any other verse in the Bible.

Believing Israel should love each other to encourage each other to obey God's commandments. The fear of God helps in this regard, as well. These two things (loving brethren and fearing God) are sandwiched in the middle of knowing all men and the king. So, they are to love each other and fear God to make it through the tribulation period, while honoring those who persecute and kill them. In so doing, they love both believers and unbelievers. If they honour unbelievers, the lost will have no excuse not to believe. If they love their brethren, they will differentiate themselves from apostate Israel (John 13:35), which will also cause the lost sheep of the house of Israel to be saved. This is a tall order to fill. It is only through the Spirit's help that they can do this (1:22) in the tribulation period.

2:18 Most people will tell you that the word "froward" means "perverse." However, the Bible defines its own terms. "Froward" is used 25 times in scripture, and its first use in scripture indicates that it means to have no faith (Deuteronomy 32:20). This means that the little flock is to serve their earthly masters, regardless of if they are believers or not. In this way, no one will accuse them of being good servants only if their masters are part of "their club." Then, others may see this and be saved.

It is the same with us today (Ephesians 6:5-8 and Colossians 3:22-23). If we set our affection on things above (Colossians 3:2), we will then put to death the lusts of the flesh (Colossians 3:5), and not treat others based upon their status or lack of status in the "Christian club."

2:19-20 The little flock will suffer wrongfully at the hands of apostate Israel during the tribulation period. The reason this is "acceptable with God" (2:20) is because the fruit that the suffering produces are: 1) Saved souls, and 2) Purifying out the lusts of the flesh among those persecuted. When the little flock is arrested and brought to trial before rulers (Matthew 10:17-18), the world will be watching them. If they kick, scream, and beg, they will act like normal people, and the world will dismiss what they say. However, if they suffer patiently and allow the Holy Spirit to speak through them when they are on trial (Matthew 10:19-20), unbelievers will take note that they are suffering wrongfully. This will add credibility to their message.

Then, the next time an unbeliever hears the gospel of the kingdom, he just might believe it. We see an example of this in Acts 5:40 – 6:1. In Acts 5:41, the little flock leaves "the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name." Then, just two verses later, we are told that "in those days...the number of the disciples was multiplied" (Acts 6:1). But, if they had complained about how

unfairly they were treated, they would have focused unbelievers on the little flock, rather than on God, and they would have remained unbelievers. Therefore, it is “thankworthy” when a believer suffers wrongly for believing God and His Word (2:19). In addition, Matthew 5:12 says that suffering believers will be rewarded for their suffering.

2:21 Christ is the suffering example for the believing remnant to follow. We see this in Hebrews 12:1-3, which says that believers are to lay aside every weight of sin by looking unto Jesus, “Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame.” Jesus also said that, since they persecuted Him, the Master (Matthew 10:24-25), unbelievers would also certainly persecute the Master’s servants (the little flock). Therefore, rather than complaining about their suffering being unfair, the little flock should despise the flesh’s shameful feeling, as Christ did, and see that they are being treated just like Christ was. That means that they must be doing the will of the Father. Therefore, they should rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus’ name (Acts 5:41).

There is a famous “Christian” poem called “Footprints.” The poem says that the Lord walks with you during your entire Christian life, except that He carries you in the most difficult times, so that you are spared from having to walk during those times. However, 2:21 says: “That ye should follow His steps.” If the little flock follows His steps, then Christ must not be carrying them or walking beside them!

The idea of Christ caring so much that He spares you from suffering is a lovely sentiment for the flesh, but the idea is horrendous for the soul, because growth comes from suffering. The Lord said, “My strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Corinthians 12:9). The proper response to suffering is not, “Lord, take it away,” but it is: “I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10). Christians also often twist I Corinthians 10:13 to say that God takes away trials that you cannot handle. However, the verse really says that God creates a way for you to BEAR the temptation. He does not take it away from you. Thus, we have another example of how Christians change the Bible to read what they want it to read, and not what God really said. If they did not do this, the “Footprints” poem never would have been printed.

2:22-23 Not only did Jesus not sin as He lived His normal life, but He also did not sin when He was wrongly judged. Jesus knew that He was sinless and worthy of no punishment. However, He also knew that “the powers that be are ordained of God” (Romans 13:1). If He resisted those over Him, He would have resisted the ordinance of God (Romans 13:2). (As a bad example of this, Paul ignorantly resisted the high priest and then quoted scripture to prove he was in the wrong, in spite of being wrongfully accused (Acts 23:1-5).) He also would have been disobeying God’s written law of Moses (see Exodus 22:28). Just because those over Him were sinning does not mean that it was okay for Him to sin as well. Two wrongs do not make a right. So, He did not revile, He did not threaten them, and there was no guile in Him (2:22-23). Thus, He remained sinless. Jesus maintained His faith in God, that, when it came to eternal judgment, God would judge Him

righteously (2:23). By faith, he said, “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

Such a commitment by Jesus Christ “to Him that judgeth righteously” (2:23) is hard to understand. The reason is because that, while vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35 and Romans 12:19), Jesus Christ IS the Lord (Philippians 2:11)! As such, He IS the righteous judge (II Timothy 4:8). In other words, by not reviling, Jesus Christ would not judge, but He left it up to Himself, as Lord, to bring judgment upon His accusers. This shows that Jesus was fully God and fully man, in that He could act as a man, not allowing His position as God to interfere. How this happens is a mystery to us.

However, if the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5), could act fully as a man, how much more, then, should the little flock act as saved men and follow His example. Therefore, when they are judged unjustly, they are to take their judgment patiently, trusting that, in the judgment of their souls, the Lord will judge them righteously. If they have guile and complain about the unfairness of it all, they will be breaking God’s command to submit to their rulers (2:13-14) and honour them (2:17). After all, guile is of Satan (II Corinthians 11:3). It should not be found in believers (2:1, 3:10, and Revelation 14:5).

They would also be showing a lack of faith in God. Therefore, they would be sinning, damaging the effectiveness of the gospel to unbelievers. That is why Jesus told them not to fight, but to rely upon the Holy Spirit to give them the words to say in those situations (Mark 13:11). That’s what Jesus did, and He is their example. They are to submit to the judgment given them; thereby, committing themselves to the righteous judgment of the Lord (2:23).

Another reason, that they are to allow the Lord to be the judge, is because evil is overcome with good, not with evil (Romans 12:21). By rewarding evil with good, the little flock will “heap coals of fire” upon their enemy’s head (Proverbs 25:21-22), which probably means that being good allows the unbelievers to see more clearly the fire that is awaiting them in hell, if they do not believe the kingdom gospel.

2:24-25 Note how 2:24 says that Jesus bore their sins “in His Own body.” This shows that Jesus had to have a body in order to bear Israel’s sins. That is why Hebrews 10:5 says: “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me.” In other words, Jesus could not just offer animal sacrifices for God’s wrath to be appeased. He actually had to become the sacrifice Himself by living a perfect life in a physical body. He would then be “made...sin for us” (II Corinthians 5:21). The fact, that He died “on the tree” (2:24), means that He became a curse for Israel under the Mosaic law (Galatians 3:13 and Deuteronomy 21:22-23), so that Israel would not have to bear their punishment under that law.

Since Israel’s sins were judged at the cross, Israel is now dead to sins (2:24). This is a little different than our situation today in the mystery dispensation. Today, we have “now received the atonement” (Romans 5:11), and so we have already received the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). The Holy Spirit,

then, has baptized us into the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13), which means that we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:4) so that we can already walk in a lifestyle fitting with our eternal life, which we already have (Romans 6:4). Under the prophecy program, all this will happen for them under the new covenant, which does not go into effect until Jesus' second coming.

Therefore, in the tribulation period, Israel has not yet received the atonement (Acts 3:19-20), which means that they do not have the indwelling Holy Spirit. They have the Holy Ghost poured out on them, but He cannot dwell inside them yet, since they do not have the atonement yet. This means that they are not baptized into Christ's death yet. They are "dead to sins" (2:24), positionally speaking, because Christ's death takes the power of sin away from being over them. This means that they are "freed from sin" (Romans 6:2,6,11), and so they no longer have to obey their sin nature. Their new position in Christ enables them to "live unto righteousness" (2:24) out of a greater fear of God (Hebrews 12:18-29) than what was even in the Mosaic law. They do not "live unto righteousness" by walking in the Spirit, because they cannot walk in the Spirit, because their sins have not been forgiven yet.

That is why they are called sheep, who have returned unto "the Shepherd and Bishop of [their] souls" (2:25). Jesus is the Good Shepherd (Psalm 23 and John 10:11), bringing the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24) into God's sheepfold (Isaiah 40:11), fulfilling Jeremiah 23:3-6. Sheep obey their Shepherd out of fear, not out of love. The good news is that, regardless of what the Antichrist does to them, he cannot destroy their souls (Matthew 10:28). That is because Jesus is the Bishop of their souls, which means that those, who belong to Jesus, will receive eternal life.

Today, in the dispensation of grace, we are no longer under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). Therefore, instead of treating us like sheep, God treats us today like full-grown sons (Galatians 4:7), giving us the liberty to make decisions for ourselves (Galatians 5:1).

Note that the wording of 2:24-25 is similar to the wording of Isaiah 53:5-6, showing that it is the Messiah's death, and not any works that Israel can do, that gives them eternal life. Therefore, they should not follow apostate Israel's religion, but they should have faith in God's promises to them.

Both 2:24 and Isaiah 53:5 mention that believing Israel is healed by Jesus' stripes. Christianity says these are physical stripes. While it is true that Jesus was scourged (Matthew 27:26), Matthew – John never calls this receiving stripes. Even if these are stripes, how is Israel healed by Him being beaten by men? His battle was a spiritual battle with Satan. From the cross, Jesus declared to Satan: "Who will contend with Me? let us stand together: who is Mine adversary? let him come near to Me" (Isaiah 50:8). He says this because of the promise of Genesis 3:15 that, in the battle with Satan, Satan would bruise Jesus' heel, while Jesus would bruise Satan's head. Furthermore, Colossians 2:14-15 says that Jesus triumphed over principalities and powers through the cross.

When you consider that, in Psalm 89:32, God promises to bring the rod and stripes upon David's children for their sin and Jesus bore their sins (2:24), the appropriate conclusion is that the stripes, that heal Israel, are spiritual stripes, not physical ones. Isaiah 53:10 says that "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" and that His soul was made "an offering for sin." Therefore, spiritually speaking, Jesus contended with Satan from the cross. Satan inflicted a bruise to His heel. Also, God gave Him spiritual stripes in making Him an offering for sin so that the Lord would be pleased with His sacrifice, meaning that God accepted His sacrifice as the payment for believing Israel's sins. Physical stripes could never accomplish soul forgiveness.

3 This chapter continues discussing how Israel should live in the tribulation period. Although husbands are the spiritual leaders of their household, wives can "lead" their husbands into obeying God's Word to them by obeying their husbands in a godly manner and by dressing modestly (vs. 1-7). The husband, then, should do good by obeying God's commandment, instead of behaving as the religious crowd will (vs. 8-12). Granted, they will suffer for their obedience (vs. 13-14), but this will give them the opportunity to share the gospel with other Jews (v. 15). Christ has already suffered for their sins and has already overcome Satan's forces. Therefore, if Israel believes and is water baptized, they will also be raised from the dead to eternal life by the Spirit (vs. 18-22). Because of Christ's power over Satan, the little flock should not worry about Satan's forces, because they cannot harm their souls in any way (v. 13).

3:1-2 The word "likewise" connects this verse with the previous verse, even though it is a different topic. This shows that the way wives are to submit unto their husbands is similar to how saved Israel is to submit to the commands of God. Therefore, wives are to obey what their husbands tell them to do. This is not a popular idea today, because the woman's desire is to rule over her husband, rather than being ruled by him (Genesis 3:16). However, her obedience of her husband does allow her to "rule" spiritually in that she obeys God by fulfilling the role that God has given her. Thus, when her husband will not obey the Word of God and she obeys her husband anyway, she sets the example of how her husband should submit to Christ (I Corinthians 11:3). Therefore, without even speaking, her "conversation" or lifestyle shows her husband how he should behave when it comes to God's commands so that he is spiritually "won by the conversation" of his wife (3:1). The instructions are worded like this for Israel in the tribulation period, because they are still under the law. A man's pride may keep him from obeying God, but his wife's example of "chaste conversation coupled with fear" (3:2) will show to him that he needs to set aside his pride and submit to God instead.

Most every Christian leader would contradict these verses by saying that a believing wife should tell the gospel to her unbelieving husband and try to get him to go to church with her. Since wives desire to control their husbands (Genesis 3:16), most every wife in this situation would allow her pastor's false doctrine to do just that. However, God's Word says that "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to

usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (I Timothy 2:12). God, Who created male and female, has defined roles for each gender. God says that it is more important for the woman to follow her role than to usurp authority over her husband, even though she is thinking correctly and he is not.

This is true because the pride of man will cause him not to listen to her, even if he thinks she may be right. Every wife knows that the only reason nagging her husband works is because he will obey so that he does not have to listen to her nag any more. This is a forced obedience, and God only saves those who believe out of a free-will choice (Revelation 22:17). Therefore, even if the wife nags and gets the husband to come to church and say he believes, he is not really saved unless he uses his own brain and believes the gospel out of a free-will response to it. “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17), not “faith cometh by nagging, and nagging by the word of the wife.” Therefore, God, Who knows the inner workings of both the woman and the man, in His wisdom, has decreed that the believing woman is to live a godly life in front of her unbelieving husband and not use words to try to get him to change his mind.

Therefore, Titus 2:3-4 lists eight things that a young woman is to DO, including loving and obeying her husband. Titus 2:6 only gives one thing for a young man to do, and that is “to be sober minded.” Thus, these verses tell us that a man’s job is to THINK correctly, while a woman’s job is to ACT correctly (Titus 2:1-6). Therefore, a believing wife should live a godly life and submit to the authority of her unbelieving husband, not using words to try to change his mind. Then, the husband can observe her “chaste conversation coupled with fear” (3:2), learn that she is behaving correctly, and seek out the truth HIMSELF so that he may believe the gospel out of a free-will response to hearing the Word of God, rather than doing so to please his wife.

This shows how important roles are to God. God set up roles and wants all believers to follow their respective roles, regardless of what others do. Therefore, the believing wife is to submit to her unbelieving husband, even when her husband is wrong. A similar situation to this is found in Romans 13:1-2, where Paul tells us that “the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” Paul says this of the government, even though he was eventually killed by the governmental powers over him. This shows that the government was wrong, yet Paul was still to submit to the government’s authority over him. Applied to wives, then, they should submit to the authority of their husbands, even when their husbands are wrong. Not doing so means that they are rebelling against God, because they do not have faith in the system that God set up.

3:3-4 For the most part, men are attracted to women based upon their outward appearance. Because women want to control men, they try to make themselves as sexy as possible to them. The more fleshly desirable they are to men, the better they are able to control men. Therefore, if they fix their hair, wear precious jewels, and put on clothing that does not even cover half of their bodies, they appeal to

the flesh, and have men after them. Instead of appealing to the flesh, women should appeal to the spiritual side of men. Their “ornament” should be “a meek and quiet spirit” (3:4), rather than fancy hair, expensive jewels, and sexy clothing. This way, they witness to everyone they meet without even saying anything, because they will stand out as different.

The best way for a woman to do this today is by not having long hair, not wearing makeup or jewelry, not getting plastic surgery or cosmetic procedures, and covering up her body with as much clothing as possible. Since most clothing for women today does not cover the part of their bodies above their breasts nor their legs below the knees, women may have to make their own clothing, find specialty stores, or wear t-shirts and long pants in order to obey the suggestion of wearing “modest apparel,” found in I Timothy 2:9.

Women may allow themselves to be deceived (Jeremiah 17:9) by rationalizing that they should not obey this suggestion, lest they be labeled as lesbians taking the male role. However, it should be noted that homosexuality will probably be prevalent during the at-hand phase of the kingdom for Israel. This is seen in that: 1) The Antichrist will not “regard...the desire of women” (Daniel 11:37), 2) Jesus compares the condition of the earth at His second coming to how the earth “was in the days of Lot” (Luke 17:28), which is known as a time of rampant homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-5), and 3) Jesus said that, at His second coming, “there shall be two men in one bed” (Luke 17:34). Therefore, even in a homosexual culture, God instructs believing women not to do things to make themselves look fleshly appealing on the outside.

After all, the deceitfulness of man’s desperately wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9) will cause him to look for any excuse possible not to believe. Peter even mentioned that apostate Israel will speak of the little flock as evildoers, even though they do good works (2:12). Therefore, unbelievers will find fault with believers so as to excuse their own ungodly behavior (Romans 2:15). Besides, even if a woman wears no makeup, has short hair, and wears a t-shirt and pants like a man, it will be obvious to those, who want to believe the truth, that the woman is not a lesbian, since lesbians are some of the most miserable, hateful people in the world, while a godly woman will have a “chaste conversation” (3:2).

While we are on this topic, we should also note that 3:4 also says that the woman has a “hidden man of the heart.” This does not mean that every woman is a transgender. Rather, it shows that the Bible is not biased toward the male gender, as people claim that it is. Genesis 5:1-2 says that, “in the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made He him; Male and female created He them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.” Thus, both male and female are part of God’s creation known as “man.” In other words, “man” is another name for humans. A “wo”man is simply a man with a womb. Therefore, when the Bible uses the word “man,” it usually is referring to mankind as a whole. Since the woman is a man (part of mankind, not the male gender), “the hidden MAN of the heart” is an appropriate description of the “inner man” or inner person (Ephesians 3:16) of the woman. Understanding this, we

know that 3:4 is still talking about women, not transgenders. By the way, all modern versions take this important distinction away from this verse so that you can continue to think how the world thinks.

Note that God values the woman's "meek and quiet spirit" over any precious jewel that she might adorn herself with (3:4), because "beauty is vain" (Proverbs 31:30). Such jewel adornment is not unlike what Lucifer did in the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 28:13), showing that women's attempts at outward beauty often have her looking more like a child of the devil than like a child of God. If her husband sees her looking more like God than the devil, it may cause him to have the same values and obey God's commandments, as well.

The term "great price" is mentioned twice in scripture—here and Matthew 13:46. In the Matthew passage, Jesus Christ is said to seek goodly pearls and sell all that He had in order to obtain "one pearl of great price." What Jesus had was a position of authority in heavenly places with God the Father. But, He wanted to be married to His bride, Israel (Revelation 19:7-8 and 21:9-21). In order to make her worthy of His holiness, Jesus "was made a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:9). He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant..., and became obedient unto death" (Philippians 2:7-8). This is how He sold all He had in order to obtain the pearl of great price. (Similarly, husbands are to love their "wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).) Now, according to 3:4, a woman can be "of great price" "in the sight of God," i.e., she can become part of that "pearl of great price" (Matthew 13:46) by living a godly life, which includes submitting to the authority of her unsaved husband. Therefore, a godly woman will increase her value to God by abandoning the "liberation" of herself through worldly efforts, such as feminism, equal rights, and woman power, and submitting herself to the lordship of her own husband.

3:5 Women, who have faith in God, tend not to wear jewelry, makeup, or high heels, because they follow God's order by being subject to their own husbands. They do not try to stand out, but they try to have God stand out through them. In other words, they "have this treasure [Christ] in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of [themselves]" (II Corinthians 4:7). A lot of Christians wish that people could tell that they are Christians just by looking at them. Well, if you are a woman, you can at least give them a clue that you are not bowing down to the idols of this world by not wearing jewelry, makeup, expensive clothing, high heels, or revealing clothing. Yet, women in churches today often do the opposite. They wear sexy dresses and spend much time on their hair, makeup, and jewelry in an effort to outdo the other women in the church. They justify this by saying that they want to look good so that they show that they respect the house of God. However, God is respected when He is obeyed. Therefore, women actually disrespect God when they claim to be serving God in going to church in a manner that focuses on their outward appearance. Thus, they show their lack of faith in God by disobeying His instruction to be modest in appearance. They also make it harder for the men to learn sound doctrine, since they are more likely to be distracted from God's Word when women are around them, trying to look as sexy as possible. This is why Old-Testament Jews,

Christians of the first few centuries, and some Christian congregations today segregate men from women when they gather together.

Moreover, during the Great Tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period), the difference between godly and ungodly women will be even easier to spot, since faithful women will not have money to adorn themselves as the world does, even if they wanted to, because they will not take the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:17). Modesty in dress and being subject to their own husbands are trademarks of “holy women..., who trusted in God” (3:5) in the Old Testament.

3:6 Sara is an example of a holy woman, simply because she obeyed her husband. She recognized that God had made her husband to be the master over her. What is interesting is that the reference to calling Abraham “lord” is Genesis 18:12. This verse is part of Sara’s general statement of unbelief in God’s promise to her that she will bear a child in her old age. Therefore, even though she did not believe what God told her regarding Isaac, she is still commended for her faith because she did her part in subjecting herself to her husband. (Hebrews 11:11 also lists Sara as an example of faith.) It is then up to her husband to take care of his part, which is subjecting himself to the Lord. Thus, God is trusted, even though Sarah did not believe God regarding the birth of Isaac.

So valued is Sarah’s faith in submitting to her husband that God promised to make her “a mother of nations” (Genesis 17:16). This also shows how rare it is for a woman to submit to her husband’s authority. In fact, Ecclesiastes 7:28 says that Solomon could only find “one man among a thousand,” who was upright, “but a woman among all those have I not found.” Now we see why a woman, who submits to the authority of her husband, is “in the sight of God of great price” (3:4). Therefore, in the tribulation period, women can show their faith in God by obeying their husbands, even if they do not have faith in God’s promises to Israel. By doing this, they are daughters of Sara (3:7).

I believe that the phrase not being “afraid with any amazement” has to do with the women’s reaction to the Antichrist. Revelation 13:3-4 says that “all the world wondered after the beast” and said “Who is like unto the beast?” Women, in particular, must be drawn to him, because Daniel 11:37 says that the Antichrist does not regard “the desire of women,” implying that women follow him. The result is that the world takes the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16) and goes to the lake of fire (Revelation 14:9-11) with the women being the people leading their families into eternal damnation, just like Eve led Adam in Genesis 3. By the way, Eve was also probably “afraid with any amazement” when it came to the serpent, since she was “beguiled” (Genesis 3:13 and II Corinthians 11:3) by him, which means “to deceive by amusement.” However, a godly woman will fear God by obeying her husband (3:2). What she should not do is follow the Antichrist, being amazed by the wonders he performs. If she submits to the Antichrist, rather than to her own husband, she is in trouble. She would be following her emotions, rather than God’s Word to her, which means that she would not be part of believing Israel, and she would probably drag the rest of her family into apostasy, as well.

Today, we see women being “afraid with any amazement” (3:6) when it comes to megachurches, Christian denominations, and televangelists. Tall, dark, and handsome men with smooth words and pleasant sounding voices perform theatrics and women give their money over to them. That is why II Timothy 3:6 says that these charlatans “lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.”

3:7 Note that six verses of instruction were given to wives, while only one verse is given to husbands. This shows that, even though the husbands are the head of their wives, the wives’ obedience often sets the example of faith in God that the husbands are to follow. The instruction to the husbands is for them to dwell with their wives “according to knowledge” (3:7). This means that the husbands need to recognize that the wives are to submit to them. Therefore, the husbands need to assume their God-given role of being the spiritual leaders. They are to read God’s Word and believe its sound doctrine. They are then to take that light and impart it to their wives.

The husband is likened unto the sun, and the wife is likened unto the moon. She is the reflection of the light that her husband gives her. (We see these terms used for the husband and wife in Genesis 37:9-10.) If the husband studies God’s Word to him and obeys it, then he is dwelling with his wife according to knowledge, and he is “giving honour unto the wife” (3:7) by giving her the light of God’s Word, like the sun gives the moon its light. The moon is the weaker vessel than the sun in terms of light, but it is the moon’s reflection of the sun that is vital for seeing at night. Similarly, spiritually speaking, the wife is the weaker vessel of the husband. This is shown by Eve’s being deceived by Satan, rather than Adam being deceived by Satan (I Timothy 2:14), which is also why a woman is not to teach or usurp authority over a man (I Timothy 2:12). However, without her guiding the house (I Timothy 5:14) toward faith in God’s Word during the tribulation period, most of Israel will not “see” the spiritual reality of the situation. After all, she is a light during the night, and the tribulation period is a time of darkness (Joel 2:2,31, Amos 5:18,20, Zephaniah 1:14-15, and I Peter 2:9).

An example of women, having faith when men fail, is seen in the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection. When Jesus was arrested, “all the disciples forsook Him, and fled” (Matthew 26:56). Yet, it was women who went to Jesus’ grave on resurrection morning (Luke 24:10), even though they could not roll away the grave stone (Mark 16:3) and there were Roman guards protecting the grave (Matthew 27:64-66). This shows how, when it comes to spiritual things, weakness is actually a good thing. After all, Paul said that “when I am weak, then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10). Moreover, Jesus said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).

We also have a parallel to men being over women in that God gave Jews a higher standing with Him than the Gentiles had (Deuteronomy 4:7-8, 7:6-7, and Romans 3:1-2). The Gentiles could have complained about how unfair God is and demand “Gentile rights” and “Gentile power,” like the world does with women today. Or, we

can recognize that, by placing the Jews above the Gentiles, God actually ended up saving the Gentiles first (Romans 11:25-26). This shows God's wisdom (Romans 11:30-33). Similarly, women often believe God, while men use the wisdom of this world and their pride to remain in unbelief, which shows God's wisdom in making women the servants of men.

And, as previously mentioned, the woman is considered faithful by submitting to her husband, even if she does not believe what God has said about other things (3:6 and Genesis 18:12). Her "chaste conversation coupled with fear" (3:2) then gives her husband a greater opportunity to have faith in God's Word to him, regarding the Antichrist and Satan's lie program. If he does this, he will then dwell in knowledge, and give honour to his wife, because she obeys what God says because her husband obeys what God says. Therefore, the husband's role is to get in the Word, study it, and believe it. Then, his wife will also obey God's Word by obeying her husband. This makes them "heirs together of the grace of life" (3:7), meaning that they both receive God's grace to make it through the tribulation period because they have submitted themselves to God (James 4:5-7).

Since they are both living in faith, the man's prayers are not hindered (3:7). An example of hindered prayer, during the at-hand phase of the kingdom, is found in Matthew 17:15-20, where Jesus' disciples could not cast out a lunatic devil, because of their unbelief regarding Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 16:21-23). Similarly, believing husbands, who do not have the faith in God to view their believing wives in their God-given role, will not be able to perform the signs of the kingdom in order to confirm the gospel to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mark 16:17-20). This shows that, for the husband, faith begins in the home. Thus, we see that the wife, submitting to her husband, causes the husband to have faith in God, which saves him and others as he preaches the gospel in Israel, because his prayers are not hindered, being prayers of faith.

3:8-9 As previously discussed, God made the male brain to think differently than the female brain. As a result, there is great conflict between the sexes. Peter just gave seven verses on the interactions between husbands and wives. Galatians 3:28 says that, in Christ, "there is neither male nor female." Instead, there is only "the mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16). This means that, if the little flock will believe God's Word to them, there will be no conflicts, because they will be "of one mind" (3:8)—the mind of Christ. Just eliminating conflicts between men and women would make them different, much less all of the other conflicts that arise! That is why Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). By using the mind of Christ, all believers will have the same goal of obeying God's commandments and seeking to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel with the gospel of the kingdom (Matthew 10:5-6).

"Compassion one of another" means they will sell all of their goods and distribute them to those, who have need (Acts 4:34-35). "Love AS brethren" means that Peter is not talking about loving believers any more, but is now talking about loving unbelievers, as if they are brethren. Jesus said to "love your enemies" (Matthew

5:44). If believing Israel shows love to those, who are persecuting them, the persecutors may believe the gospel and join the little flock.

“Be pitiful” (3:8) means that they should be full of pity for unbelieving Israel, knowing that they will go to the lake of fire, if they continue in their unbelief. Therefore, Peter is saying that the material poor in Israel should pity the material rich in Israel, because the material poor are spiritually rich, while the material rich are spiritually poor.

“Be courteous” has a colon after it, showing that the little flock is to be courteous by “not rendering evil for evil” (3:9). Apostate Israel will be doing evil to the little flock by unjustly persecuting them (2:19-20). Instead of being mean back to them, the little flock should share the gospel with them when given the chance. That is the “blessing” that they can try to render to apostate Israel in exchange for the evil that apostate Israel bestows upon the little flock.

The little flock is called to “inherit a blessing” (3:9) in the kingdom, meaning that they will “inherit everlasting life” and “receive an hundredfold” of everything they gave up for God (Matthew 19:29). Therefore, they should seek to bring apostate Israel up to their level, rather than stooping to apostate Israel’s level. After all, God did the same for believing Israel when He sent His Son to redeem them. Are they better than God is? Of course not (Matthew 10:24)!

3:10-12 Psalm 34:11 says, “I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” The next five verses then give an explanation that is very similar to I Peter 3:10-12. Peter has already mentioned, in 2:17, that they are to “fear God.” Therefore, these three verses tell them how that is accomplished.

We should note that the preface to Psalm 34 says that David wrote the Psalm “when he changed his behavior before Abimelech.” This refers to the event of I Samuel 21:10-15, when David was afraid that Abimelech (called Achish in I Samuel) would have him killed, because Saul was trying to kill him. At this time, David “played the mad man,” and Abimelech left him alone. The reason this is important is because, in the tribulation period, the Antichrist (Saul is a type of the Antichrist) will be trying to kill all those who do not bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). If a member of the believing remnant fears the Lord, he will “refrain his tongue from evil” (3:10), “eschew evil, and do good” (3:11). Spiritually speaking, this will be how he “plays the mad man,” because such behavior will seem crazy at the time, since he will be giving up wealth and power and will be fleeing for his life. But, as with David, the fear of the Lord looks crazy to man, because unbelievers have “no fear of God before [their] eyes” (Psalm 36:1).

3:10-11 “He that will love life” (3:10) is not the person who is happy, carefree, and enjoys the things of this world, as most people would have you believe this verse is saying. Such a belief helps promote the health-and-wealth prosperity gospel. Rather, “he that will love life” refers to the person who loves ETERNAL life in God’s kingdom, as opposed to following the lusts of their flesh and joining apostate Israel and the Antichrist, as a result. This person will “see good days” (3:10) in God’s

kingdom, as opposed to the evil days he is currently experiencing in the tribulation period.

The believer's tongue does not speak evil or guile (3:10). Remember that James spent all of chapter 3 in his epistle talking about the evils of the tongue. Note what the Antichrist does. He obtains "the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21). Then, he corrupts people by flatteries into following him down into perdition (Daniel 11:32). Then, he speaks "marvellous things against the God of gods," magnifying himself (Daniel 11:36-37). Revelation 13:5 says he has "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Therefore, we see that the Antichrist uses his tongue to obtain the kingdom, strengthen his kingdom, and exalt himself to be god. This shows how important it is for the little flock to refrain their tongues from evil (3:10).

Once Israel's leader (the Antichrist) comes to power, it will be very easy for Israel to use their tongue to speak the same evil and blasphemies that the Antichrist does. Therefore, we can see the importance of taming the tongue. If believing Israel does not speak evil or hold guile against God and the believing remnant, then they can do verse 11. That is, they can get "eschew" or flee from evil and do good by obeying God's commands to them, which includes preaching the gospel of the kingdom to Israel (Matthew 10:6). Therefore, while the Antichrist uses his tongue to speak great things against God, the believing remnant can use their feet to go and preach the gospel to Israel. That is why Isaiah 52:7 says: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good that publisheth salvation."

Note that Isaiah 52:7 says that they proclaim the gospel of "peace." That is how believing Jews seek peace and ensue or pursue it in the tribulation period (3:11). They are not seeking peace with the world or with the Antichrist. It is the Antichrist's kingdom that promotes world peace (I Thessalonians 5:3). For the little flock, Jesus said that He brought a sword, and not peace, even to the point of dividing family members against each other (Matthew 10:34-36). The peace, that the believing remnant seeks, is the peace that lasts eternally—the peace of God. "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isaiah 9:7). The believing remnant seeks this peace, both for themselves and for the rest of Israel by their belief in the gospel of peace (Isaiah 52:7)—the gospel of the kingdom of God.

3:12 It may seem to the believing remnant in the tribulation period that God is not watching over them or hearing their prayers, but that is simply not true. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (II Chronicles 16:9), and "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3). Therefore, the believing remnant should trust God's Word over what their flesh tells them. In fact, the saints' prayers are so precious to God that He places them in golden vials (Revelation 5:8). Also, the saints' tears are so precious to God that He places them in His bottle (Psalm 56:8). Therefore, the little flock should continue to serve God in the tribulation period, having faith that God will take vengeance upon their enemies (Isaiah 35:3-4), while rewarding the righteous.

Finally, we should note that, while “the EYES of the Lord are over the righteous,” “the FACE of the Lord is against them that do evil” (3:12). Exodus 33:20 says that man, meaning unglorified man, cannot see God’s face and live. Therefore, when unbelieving man comes face to face with God, he will die, which is why the Lord’s face is against them, rather than just His eyes.

3:13 “Who is he” should tell Peter’s audience to ask: “Who is the Antichrist? Is he God?” Since he is not God, they should not fear him. Jesus said, “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Granted, the little flock will suffer persecution at the hands of the Antichrist’s minions in the tribulation period. Jesus says that their eyes may be plucked out and their arms may be cut off (Mark 9:42-48). Apostate Israel may bring them physical harm, and even death, but no one can harm their souls except God. Since the Antichrist is not God, he can do them no harm. Therefore, they should not fear what the Antichrist may do to them.

3:14 The word “harm,” in 3:13 then, refers to the spiritual condition, while the word “suffer,” in 3:14, refers to the physical. Peter mentions suffering here, as opposed to being harmed, so that the little flock will see the difference between the two. That way, they know they will “suffer” persecution for living godly lives, but they also know that, in terms of their eternal state, no “harm” will come their way (3:13). This eternal perspective will keep them from being afraid or troubled by the extreme persecution they receive in the tribulation period. In fact, they will actually be happy in their suffering, because: 1) They know that their reward becomes greater because of their suffering for righteousness’ sake (Matthew 5:10), and 2) The suffering is confirmation that they have faith in God because the prophets before them were persecuted by apostate Israel, also (Matthew 5:12).

3:15 The little flock sanctifies the Lord God in their hearts by believing God’s promises to them and by putting themselves under the law covenant, as a result. God gave the law covenant to Israel and told them to circumcise their hearts (Deuteronomy 10:16) by having faith in that covenant. If they do that, their hearts will be sanctified, because the flesh has been “cut off.” Then, their hearts will be prepared for the new covenant when the law is written on their hearts (Jeremiah 31:33) and they have the Holy Spirit indwell them, causing them to walk in God’s law (Ezekiel 36:27) in God’s kingdom on earth. Therefore, the tribulation period purifies Israel (Malachi 3:3-4) so that they will be ready for the kingdom.

This sanctification process also helps the little flock reach the unsaved in Israel during the tribulation period. With the rise of the Antichrist, the talk of the day, among ordinary Jews, will be if he is their promised Messiah or not. Therefore, when the little flock professes to have eternal life in God’s kingdom even though they do not follow the Antichrist and apostate Israel, unbelieving Israel will ask them for “a reason of the hope that is in [them]” (3:15). This will give the little flock the chance to share scripture with them, showing them that Jesus is the Christ, while the Antichrist is an imposter. Unbelievers will need scriptural evidence so

that their faith is in God's Word to them, rather than in man's word to them (Romans 10:17).

Note how they are to give an answer to those who ask them. Being an unbeliever is like being an alcoholic. Both are drunk, and both need to become sober. An alcoholic must desire to become sober first. Similarly, while all unbelievers need to hear the gospel, only those, who see their need for the gospel, will believe. Therefore, Peter tells the believing remnant to be ready when these people ask them about their hope in God's eternal kingdom.

Note also that the little flock is to give their scriptural evidence in "meekness and fear." Meekness is often thought of as a passive attitude, not trying to create any waves. However, meekness is really peace under pressure. We see this with both Moses and Jesus. Moses was the meekest man on earth (Numbers 12:3), yet, when Israel worshipped a golden calf, Moses ground it into powder, mixed it in with water, and made Israel drink it (Exodus 32:20). Jesus was meek (Matthew 11:29), yet He made a scourge of cords and drove the moneychangers and their animals out of the temple, overthrowing their tables (John 2:15). Therefore, meekness is not a submissive, passive attitude. Rather, meekness is acting out of peace, which may include aggressive acts, if it means they are necessary so that God's truth is not compromised. In the case of the believing remnant, meekness means they will not be intimidated by apostate Israel to abandon sound doctrine when they are threatened with persecution if they do not deny the truth. This is why "a meek and quiet spirit," among believing wives, is well pleasing to God (3:4).

3:16 Some modern translations change "good conscience" to "clear conscience." A clear conscience is when your conscience does not bother you over what you did. A good conscience is one that is established in sound doctrine. This can be seen by reading 3:15 and 3:16 together. The only way the little flock gives a correct answer about the hope within them is if they have a good conscience. If they are to have a clear conscience, then it just means that their actions do not break the law of the conscience. God is not concerned about that, which is why "clear conscience" is not found in scripture, while "good conscience" is mentioned six times, including once in 3:21.

Therefore, believing Israel needs to know the gospel of the kingdom and share it with others in meekness and fear, knowing that they did everything they could in order to bring fellow Jews into God's kingdom with them. On the other hand, apostate Israel will criticize them and try to discredit believing Israel's lifestyle (their "conversation" here), because they disobey the Antichrist and his religion and follow God's law covenant with Israel instead. They will do this because they will have bad consciences, based upon false doctrine. Therefore, they will try to "excuse" their sin by "accusing" the little flock of sin (Romans 2:15). But, this unfair treatment should not even phase believing Israel, because they have a good conscience before God, and they know that, at Jesus' second coming (2:12), those, who "falsely accuse [their] good conversation in Christ" (3:16) will be ashamed.

3:17 Normally, in a lawful society, you suffer for evil doing, rather than for well doing. That is why Job’s “friends” criticized him so much. However, like Job, the tables are turned in the tribulation period. Well doing is called evil doing, and evil doing is called well doing. So, yes, the believing remnant of Israel will suffer in the tribulation period for doing God’s will. This is okay because God’s will is “that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). This tells them that their suffering for godly reasons will bring the lost sheep of the house of Israel into the kingdom. Therefore, temporal suffering is worth the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17) that it produces.

The main way Israel’s lost sheep are saved during this time is through the suffering of believing Israel. They are accused of evil doing and brought before councils and synagogues to be beaten. They then have the opportunity to testify. Through the gift of tongues, the Holy Ghost will speak the gospel in all languages so that the lost sheep of the house of Israel hears it and believes. This is how the gospel is published to all Jews, who are scattered among all nations (Mark 13:9-13). Therefore, the little flock’s suffering is actually a good thing.

3:18 After all, Christ also suffered for doing God’s will. Peter says that Christ “ONCE suffered for sins” (3:18), which means that His death was the complete payment for sin. Hebrews 9:28 says that “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” He did so to bring Israel to God, and that is part of the reason why believing Israel suffers in the tribulation period—to bring Israel to God so that all of the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16) will be saved (Romans 11:26). (Today, members of the body of Christ have a similar calling. Paul said that he filled “up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake” (Colossians 1:24).) Since Christ suffered only once, the believing remnant in the tribulation period will also only suffer once. Once Jesus comes back, their suffering is over, while eternal suffering is just beginning for apostate Israel.

Christ was “put to death in the flesh” (3:18) so He could make the payment for sin (Romans 6:23). Since Christ “did no sin” (2:22), the justice of God demanded that His soul not be left in hell (Psalm 16:10). Therefore, He was “quickened by the Spirit” (3:18 and Psalm 71:20). Similarly, the little flock is made dead to sin (2:24), and may even be physically killed for their faith (Revelation 6:9). Either way, once they are saved, they are quickened by the Spirit to preach the gospel to the lost sheep of Israel.

3:19-20 There is a lot said in Christianity about “the spirits in prison” (3:19). A popular view is that the spirits in prison are Old-Testament saints in Abraham’s bosom. Christ, then, at His death, came to them and preached the gospel to believe in His death as atonement for their sins. They believed this message, and then Christ led them out of prison and brought them to heaven to live eternally. They use this verse to explain how there is only one gospel in the entire Bible, because these people were waiting in prison until they heard and believed that gospel. In other words, they say that the gospel has always been to trust in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection as atonement for sin, but some people did not understand that in the Old Testament. God knew who would believe that gospel.

So, those people went to Abraham's bosom. Then, Jesus preached the gospel to them, they believed it, and God gave them eternal life in heaven.

The main problem with this idea is that there is more than one gospel in the Bible. God told Abram that his seed would be as the stars in heaven, "and he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:5-6). In other words, Abram received righteousness by believing that his seed would be as the stars in heaven, not by believing that Jesus would die, be buried, and rise again as atonement for his sins. If Abram had to believe today's gospel in order to be saved, God would not have given him righteousness right then, but would have waited until after Jesus' death.

The second problem is that 3:19-20 says that "the spirits in prison" were disobedient during the 100 years when Noah was building the ark. That is a very limited time period that does not include anyone in all of the time before Noah started building the ark or anyone after the flood in the Old Testament. So, how could Jesus have preached to all Old-Testament saints, when 3:20 says that He only preached to spirits who sinned while Noah was building the ark?

Therefore, the typical explanation of this verse shows a complete disregard for what the verse actually says. This explanation is merely an attempt to justify bad doctrine by taking a verse out of its context, which these people do in the first place anyway, by not rightly dividing the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

Now, let us examine what this verse really says. First, the verse says they are "spirits" in prison (3:19). People are "spirit, and soul, and body" (I Thessalonians 5:23). When they die, their bodies stay in the grave until judgment time, and the soul and the spirit go to either paradise or hell. Since I Peter 3:19 says they are "spirits" in prison, rather than "souls" in prison (Jesus referred to his soul being in hell (Psalm 16:10).), we can conclude that Peter is not referring to humans. Second, 3:20 says that "the spirits in prison" were disobedient during Noah's day. They are in prison, then, for being disobedient, and not for believing God as Christianity claims. Furthermore, these spirits were disobedient long before Abraham. Therefore, it is easy to conclude, just by reading and believing these verses, that it is impossible for "the spirits in prison" to be Old-Testament saints. Also, God does call angels "spirits" (Hebrews 1:14).

Here is what is really going on. The spirits in prison are devils. (Devils are fallen angels.) Since they were disobedient, they must have done something God commanded them not to do. That "something" was to have sex with women on the earth, creating giants or superhuman men, from which a lot of Greek mythology comes (Genesis 6:1-4). This superhuman race was an effort by Satan to pollute Eve's seed line so that God's promise of a redeemer would not come to pass (Genesis 3:15). This attempt worked out well, in that, only Enoch and Noah and his family remained unpolluted. Because the world was so polluted with devils now, God brought judgment upon the earth with a worldwide flood. He saved Enoch by the rapture (type of the Body of Christ), and He saved Noah and his

family by having him endure the flood in an ark (type of believing Israel enduring the tribulation period).

Now, it took Noah 100 years to build the ark (Genesis 5:32 and 7:6). The tribulation period lasts seven years. If it lasted any longer, no flesh would be saved (Matthew 24:22). Jesus' second coming is like the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39). Therefore, if God let Satan's forces continue unabated for 100 years while Noah was building the ark, no flesh would be saved. So, God threw these spirits into prison while "the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (3:20). Apparently, the reason that God waited 100 years was so that Noah's family would believe and get in the ark, because the result of God's longsuffering was that "eight souls were saved by water" (3:20). This shows that God was willing for wickedness to go on in the earth for another 100 years, just so He could save 8 people!

II Peter 2:4-5 says that God took these "angels that sinned, [and] cast them down to hell, [delivering] them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." Why did God not judge them right away? Because Satan is "the prince of this world". "The judgment of this world" (John 12:31) could not take place until after the blood of Christ was shed. Once Christ shed His blood, He "spoiled principalities and powers, ... triumphing over them in" the cross (Colossians 2:15). Having won this victory, Christ went to the spirits in prison and preached judgment to them, now having the authority over them as "the righteous judge" (II Timothy 4:8).

By the way, another reason we know that "the spirits in prison" are these devils is because they were in prison. Believers, in Abraham's bosom, were in paradise (Luke 16:25, 23:43, and Genesis 15:15)—not in prison. Furthermore, Revelation 9:14-15 mentions bound angels, and Revelation 20:1-2 says that Satan is bound with a great chain. These references are important because II Peter 2:4 says that "the angels that sinned" were also in "chains of darkness."

Note that Christ was quickened or made alive by the Spirit (3:18), and it was by the Spirit that He "preached unto the spirits in prison" (3:19). This gives us the answer as to why, in this context, Peter brings up Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison. He is showing that Christ once suffered on this earth, but then He preached judgment unto the evildoers, having risen above all "angels and authorities and power" (3:22). Similarly, the little flock will suffer on this earth for well doing (3:17), but, at Jesus' second coming, they will enter into God's eternal kingdom on earth, and they will preach judgment unto the generation of vipers (Matthew 12:41-42). Thus, Jesus' preaching is a type of the preaching they will do at Jesus' second coming, once they have overcome sin, as Jesus tells the tribulation saints: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Revelation 3:21).

3:21 "The like figure" of this verse are the eight souls in Noah's ark, who were saved by water. Just like they were saved by water, the little flock is saved by water baptism. Mark 16:16 says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be

saved.” Acts 2:38 says: “Repent and be baptized ... for the remission of sins.” The gospel of the kingdom for Israel in the tribulation period is for them to have faith in God’s covenant with them and to show that faith by being water baptized. It was so important to God that Israel know that they would be saved by water during the at-hand phase of the kingdom that God had Noah build an ark so that Noah’s family would also be saved by water.

Note the parenthetical reference that it is not just water baptism that saved them. Water baptism was “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh” (3:21). Rather, it was “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (3:21). Remember, from 3:16, that we defined a “good conscience” as one that is established in sound doctrine. Thus, they have faith in God to save them, and the answer of that faith is to be water baptized, because God told them to do so in order to be saved. It is the answer of faith that purges their “conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14). Faith in God to save them through the law covenant and through water baptism means that they have believed the gospel of the kingdom. That is their part in receiving eternal life. That is not to say that they work for salvation, but they have faith (believing God) plus the work of faith (water baptism). Of course, without “the faith OF our Lord Jesus Christ” (James 2:1), they would not even have the offer of eternal life. Thus, Israel’s faith leads to their water baptism (their part in the salvation process) so that they are then saved “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (God’s part in the salvation process) (3:21).

We should note that today, all we have to do is believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in order to be saved (Romans 3:22). Israel has another layer between them and God, which is the Mosaic law, due to their unbelief when God brought them out of Egypt. Therefore, they have to be washed clean from their idolatry by water before they can be placed under the new covenant (Ezekiel 36:25-28).

3:22 Since Christ is now at the position of power (the right hand of God) and He is over “angels and authorities and powers,” believing Israel can trust that Jesus has the power to raise them from the dead and bring them into God’s eternal kingdom on earth. They need not worry over their suffering for well doing (3:17). They can wait with patience for God to bring them into His kingdom at the end of the tribulation period.

Also, the parallel between Christ and the little flock, that Peter has drawn in 3:18-22 is now complete. Jesus died, was made alive, preached to spirits, and received eternal life and authority in God’s kingdom (Matthew 28:18). Similarly, the little flock died to sin (2:24), were made alive by God, preach to Israel, and will receive eternal life and authority in God’s kingdom (Matthew 19:29).

4 The theme of this chapter is the little flock suffering for Christ in the tribulation period. It starts with Christ’s example of suffering (v. 1), and it ends with the little flock committing their souls to God by suffering (v. 19). Apostate Israel does not understand why believing Israel would choose to suffer, when they could be enjoying the riches and power of the Antichrist instead (v. 4). To stay strong against this material temptation, believing Israel must love each other (vs. 8-9) and

use the gift of the Holy Ghost to help each other out (vs. 10-11) so that they will endure suffering and actually be happy about it (vs. 12-16).

4:1-2 4:1 shows that popular, Christian thinking has it backwards. Most Christians think that, if they serve God, they will have good health, long life, and do well financially. They also think that those suffering are suffering because they have some unconfessed sin on their life. However, 4:1 says that those suffering in the flesh for Christ's sake have "ceased from sin." Sin comes from feeding the flesh, which means you do not have faith in God (Romans 14:23). Therefore, faith equals no sin. 4:1 says that suffering in the flesh also equals no sin. Simple algebra tells us, then, that suffering in the flesh equals having faith in God. Therefore, if the little flock chooses to suffer, it shows that they have faith in God, and so they have not sinned.

Paul says that, when our flesh is weak, then Christ is strong through us (II Corinthians 12:10). When Christ was on earth, He had it in His mind to do His Father's will, regardless of what man would do to Him as a result. That is the same mindset that the little flock will need in the tribulation period in order to live above sin.

This mindset also causes internal suffering. Galatians 5:17 says that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit." When the believing remnant has faith in God's Word to them, they use the mind of Christ. When you use the mind of Christ, you are going contrary to the flesh. The flesh then persecutes the spirit. That is why II Timothy 3:12 says that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Society, as a whole, may not persecute you, but, if you are walking in the Spirit, your flesh is persecuting you because it lusts against what the Spirit is doing. Granted, in the tribulation period, the little flock will undergo great physical suffering, but they must also die daily to the flesh (I Corinthians 15:31) in order to do "the will of God" (4:2). If they do not have the faith to allow their own flesh to persecute them by making decisions based upon the sound doctrine of God's Word, they will not be willing to undergo physical suffering when it arises.

4:3-4 Peter's audience is Jews living among Gentiles (1:1). Therefore, you may think that them doing "the will of the Gentiles" means that their best friends were Gentiles. However, Acts 10:28 says that "it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." In fact, a Jew from the two, southern tribes would not even have anything to do with a Jew from the ten, northern tribes of Israel (John 4:9). Before they were saved, then, the Jews in Peter's audience certainly would not have participated with Gentiles in the things mentioned in 4:3-4. Therefore, Peter must be calling religious Jews "Gentiles." This should not surprise us, since Paul says, "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6). Also, at Jesus' first coming, the Jews were in idolatry to the point that Galilee, a Jewish territory, was called "Galilee of the Gentiles" by God (Matthew 4:15 and Isaiah 9:1). Therefore, we should not find it surprising that religious Jews are said, by God, to be doing "the will of the Gentiles" (4:3).

This also makes sense when you examine the list in 4:3. “Lasciviousness” and “lusts” are simply following the flesh. Since religion is man’s way of pleasing God, the Jewish religion followed the lusts of the flesh. “Excess of wine, revellings, banquetings,” and “excess of riot” would describe the Jewish feasts. God had set them up as part of His religion, but the Jews had so corrupted the feasts that God referred to them as “the Jews’ feast” (John 7:2, 2:13, 5:1, 6:4, 11:55, and 19:42), not as “God’s feast.” Therefore, in “time past” (4:3), i.e., before they believed, the little flock revelled in these shameful disgraces of God’s feasts. Now, because they have stopped participating in these lustful feasts, apostate Jews speak evil of believing Jews. (We see their persecution of the little flock take place throughout the book of Acts (See Acts 4:1-3; 5:17-18; 6:11-13; 7:57-60; 17:5-7).)

Note also that part of the “will of the Gentiles” is “abominable idolatries” (4:3). The verse does not say “abominable idols,” because Peter is referring to things that the Jewish religion did that they put before God, rather than to actual statues, although “idolatries” may also include statues. Jesus listed some of these idolatries in His scathing rebuke of the Jewish religion in Matthew 23 and Luke 11: 1) The worship of priests by making them above the average Jew (Matthew 23:8-10) (seen today in calling Catholic priests “Father” and the Christian pastor “Reverend,” titles belonging to God alone (Psalm 111:9)), 2) The elevation of gold in the temple above the temple itself (Matthew 23:16) (seen today in stained-glass church windows), 3) The elevation of gifts on the altar above the altar itself (Matthew 23:18) (seen today in elevating what I can do for God above what God can do through me), 4) Made up rules (Luke 11:46) and the ignoring of God’s rules (Matthew 23:23-24) (seen today by comparing church doctrinal statements with God’s Word), 5) The worship of dead saints (Matthew 23:29) (seen today in the naming of churches after saints and in the statues built of saints), and 6) Seeking after signs instead of God Himself (Luke 11:29) (seen today by seeking after physical miracles and the manipulation of physical circumstances by God to confirm a decision instead of reading and believing God’s Word).

4:3-4 is even more true in the tribulation period, when Israel aligns themselves with the Antichrist. Jews will be running around with other Jews, partying over their “Messiah” finally coming, even though he is really the Antichrist. Then, some of the Jews will believe the truth of God’s Word and stop running around “with them to the same excess of riot” (4:4). Then, those same people, who were partying with them and having a good time, will now speak evil of the little flock (4:4).

By the way, Israel should be able to tell that the Antichrist is not their Messiah, simply by the fact that he brings a bunch of partying with him, because Zechariah 12:10-14 says that, when the Messiah does come to Jerusalem, all of Israel will mourn, because they killed him. The mourning comes before the partying. Since there is no mourning with the Antichrist, he must not be their Messiah. However, the point of 4:3-4 is that the time of living in the lusts of the flesh for believing Israel should now be in the past. Peter’s message is: Let time past suffice us as the time to do the will of the Gentiles. Do not continue in the lusts of the flesh now that you have faith in God. Instead, do the will of God.

4:5 Michael the archangel would not accuse Satan (Jude 9-10), even though Satan was obviously in the wrong. Instead, he said, “the Lord rebuke thee” (Jude 9-10). The reason he said this is because only “God is judge” (Psalm 50:6). God has made Jesus Christ “the judge of quick and dead” (Acts 10:38,42). If Michael was afraid of overstepping his boundaries, such that he would not accuse Satan, how much more should the evil Jews of apostate Israel fear God’s judgment of them for speaking evil of God’s people! They will have to give account to God, and they will be judged into hell.

4:6 Although Jesus “is ready to judge” (4:5) Israel, as James 5:9 says, “The judge standeth before the door,” Israel is not ready to be judged, because they would be subject to God’s wrath for their unbelief. Since “the Lord is...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9), He sends the gospel to Israel through the believing remnant. This gospel is “preached also to them that are dead” (4:6). That is not to say that God sent Israel to cemeteries to preach at grave markers, nor is this a reference to Jesus’ preaching to the spirits in prison in 3:19.

The way we know this is because of the reasons given for preaching to them that are dead. The first reason is so “they might be judged according to men in the flesh.” The second reason is so they may “live according to God in the spirit” (4:6). If Peter were talking about physically dead people, they would have already been judged according to men in the flesh, because they had already died. Rather, these two reasons are very similar to the language Paul uses about new believers. First, Paul says that “God...quickeneth the dead” (Romans 4:17). The ones He quickens are those “who were dead in trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1). Therefore, the “dead,” in 4:6, are those who are spiritually dead, because they have never believed the gospel. They are not physically dead.

If they believe the gospel, their sins are “judged according to men in the flesh” (4:6). In other words, they are judged as worthy of death because they have sinned in the flesh (Romans 3:23), and the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice is accounted to them to atone for their sins (Romans 3:24-25). They then receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them so that they may “live according to God in the spirit” (4:6). This is not unlike what God says happens to us today in that we are “dead with Christ” to “live with Him” (Romans 6:8).

In summary, because apostate Israel has sinned, they are subject to God’s wrath, and they are dead in their sins. Because God wants them to be saved and “the end of all things is at hand” (4:7), God has the gospel preached unto them so that they may receive the gift of eternal life. Those, who believe, are then raised from the dead spiritually and are empowered by the Spirit to live out the gospel and preach it to others so that, when the end does come, all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26), with “all” Israel being the “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16), which are all believing Jews at the end of the tribulation period. This interpretation goes right along with what 4:7-11 says, which we will now look at.

4:7 Since they have believed the gospel, the little flock can live by the law covenant and preach the gospel so that others may be saved. That is what this verse is talking about. Because the end is near, they are to be sober, which means they are to have the same mind as Christ (4:1) and do the will of God, instead of fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (4:2). Watching unto prayer means that they ask for the Holy Ghost's help in overcoming the Antichrist's temptations (Matthew 26:41) so that they will follow the law covenant and preach the gospel until Jesus' second coming.

Now, when Peter says that "the end ... is at hand," this is in reference to the end of the 70 weeks of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). Only 7 years remains in that timeline at the time that I Peter was written. Those 7 years still remain today because the prophecy program has been interrupted with today's mystery program, which began at Acts 9 and will end with the rapture of the body of Christ. In fact, the mystery program had already started by the time Peter wrote this book, because he uses the term "Christian" in 4:16, and the first people, who were called Christians, were in Antioch in Acts 11:26, which is after the dispensation of grace began in Acts 9. That is why Peter says that "the end...is at hand," rather than "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

4:8 If Satan cannot get the little flock to deny their faith in God by persecution from without the church (4:4), he will try to do so from within the church. To combat this, Peter tells the little flock to "have fervent charity among yourselves" (4:8). Love for the brethren covers "the multitude of sins" (4:8). We see this explained in James 5:19-20. There, we are given the example of someone erring from the truth, who is converted by a brother. If he does that, he "shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." "Fervent" charity is very active charity. Therefore, Peter is telling the little flock that they need to be constantly watching (4:7) to make sure there is not sin in their midst. When there is, they should confront it so that the sinner may believe the gospel and be saved. The reason this covers "the MULTITUDE of sins" is because "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (I Corinthians 5:6), meaning that, if you allow sin in your midst, the whole congregation will soon be overtaken with sin. Therefore, by confronting the sin, not only is the sinner saved from hell, but also others are saved from falling into sin and potentially going to hell, as well.

4:9 If they love one another, they will "use hospitality one to another without grudging" (4:9). We see from Acts 6 that this was a problem. The little flock was to sell what they had and have it distributed among themselves, depending on need (Acts 4:32-35). As the number of disciples multiplied, "there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 6:1). If the little flock has love for each other, those distributing will be fair, and those receiving will prefer others before themselves.

More importantly, however, hospitality also means communicating sound doctrine. Romans 12:13 says that the body of Christ should distribute "to the necessity of saints" and be "given to hospitality." "The necessity of saints" is sound doctrine, because that is the only thing that is really necessary for us. Furthermore, 4:11

talks about speaking the oracles of God. This is in light of the spiritual gift that each man has received in 4:10. Remember that the written word of God was not completed at this time, and so God gave His word verbally through spiritual gifts so that the little flock may be edified.

That is also why they needed to use hospitality “without grudging” (4:9). Doing something grudgingly means that you do it because you have to, not because you want to. This shows how a spiritual gift is a burden to the flesh. We see this with the Corinthian church. They needed someone to speak in tongues, someone to interpret the tongues, and someone to verify that what was spoken is of the Lord. However, because the flesh lusts after what the spirit has (Galatians 5:17), they had a bunch of people speaking in tongues without an interpreter, and they had people trying to talk over others who were using their gift to speak what the Lord had revealed to them (I Corinthians 14:27-31). Peter is saying something similar. If they allow the spirit to overcome the flesh, they will use their spiritual gift to communicate the word of God without grudging so that all may be edified. If they do so grudgingly, they will use their flesh to talk over each other. This will keep the little flock from being edified with sound doctrine. This shows a lack of charity, which will cause sin to take root and people will end up losing their salvation. Therefore, even in the exercise of a spiritual gift, it is important to do so with the right attitude to keep the little flock from following the lusts of the flesh.

4:10-11 “The gift,” that every man hath received (4:10), is the Holy Ghost (“And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).) This gift manifests itself differently “according to the grace that is given to us” (Romans 12:6), which is based upon “the measure of faith” (Romans 12:3) of the member of the little flock. In other words, if the person has very little faith, he might have the gift of tongues, while someone with greater faith might have the gift of prophecy (See I Corinthians 12:28 for a list of gifts in order of importance for the body of Christ before the end of Acts.) to speak the oracles of God (4:11) so that the little flock does God’s will and obeys God’s commands.

Others have the gift to minister to take care of the distribution of economic goods to meet the needs of the little flock (4:11). This is a supernatural gift, as they need to know the real needs of each person. We see Peter had such a gift to know that Ananias and Sapphira lied about what they had given (Acts 5:1-4). We also see that the 7 men appointed to take care of the daily ministrations had this gift, as they were “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). Therefore, how ever the gift of the Holy Ghost is manifest in a member of the little flock, he should use it to benefit the little flock as a whole. That is how they are “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (4:10). Then, God is glorified in all things, and that glory comes through Jesus Christ, since it is Jesus Christ, Who enables believing man to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. As such, Jesus Christ also gets praise, and the dominion over the earth will belong to Him “for ever and ever” (4:11 and Daniel 2:44). This dominion is mentioned to show that Satan’s forces cannot stop the little flock from using their spiritual gifts. After all, Jesus Christ used the cross to spoil principalities and powers and triumph over them (Colossians 2:14-15). Therefore, there is nothing Satan can do to stop the little flock from reaching all

the lost sheep of the house of Israel before Jesus' second coming, because Jesus came into Satan's house and spoiled his goods (Matthew 12:28-29).

4:12-13 Today, most Christians, in the United States, believe that they will have a good job, a loving family, and a happy life, if they serve God. Similarly, in the tribulation period, apostate Israel will join themselves to the Antichrist and receive wealth and power, as a result. They will then preach to the Jews that God will do the same for them if they follow God, which they will say is done by following the Antichrist's religion. Since the Jewish mentality will be that good things happen to believers, the little flock, who are the only ones truly serving God, may think that it is strange when they end up suffering. That is why God, through Peter, tells them: "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (4:12). Suffering for their faith may seem strange to the religious mindset, but it is not strange to the Biblical mindset. Christ suffered at the hands of the religious leaders, and so the little flock will, too. Jesus said, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matthew 10:25).

Not only should they expect to suffer, but they should also rejoice in their suffering, because it means that they are "partakers of Christ's sufferings" (4:13), which means they will also be partakers of His glory, as a result (4:13). The Old-Testament prophets "testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1:11). Suffering for God is always linked to receiving glory from God. Thus, the same suffering-glory relationship holds true for the little flock. "If so be that we suffer with [Christ], that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17-18). That is why Jesus told the little flock: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward" (Matthew 5:12).

"The fiery trial" (4:12) can refer to the tribulation period as a whole, as seen in Malachi 3:2-4, where the Lord says He is taking them through His refiner's fire to purge out their impurities before entering the kingdom. However, since 4:12 says, "THE fiery trial," it is probably referring specifically to the abomination of desolation, which is the image of the beast. When that image is set up in the temple, Jesus tells the little flock that they need to flee to the mountains (Matthew 24:15-20). The reason is because it is that event that advances the tribulation period from "the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:8) to "great tribulation" (Matthew 24:21). The reason this is the most significant event of the tribulation period is because Satan promises to kill people's bodies if they do not bow down to the image (Revelation 13:15), and God promises to kill people's souls if they do bow down to the image (Revelation 14:9-11). Thus, this event will show who believes God and who believes the Antichrist.

A type of this is seen in Daniel 3. There, we are told that all those, who will not bow down to the image, will be thrown into a fiery furnace (Daniel 3:5-6). Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah refuse to bow down, they go through the fiery

furnace, the Lord is there with them, and they come out on the other side alive without even “an hair of their head singed” (Daniel 3:20-27). While the little flock may be beheaded if they refuse to bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 20:4), the Antichrist cannot destroy their souls (Matthew 10:28). Therefore, God will resurrect them at Jesus’ second coming and restore their bodies completely. Since “the very hairs of your head are all numbered” (Matthew 10:30), the believing remnant will also come through their “fiery trial” without losing a single hair.

However, they must endure to the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 10:22). If they are succumbing to the fiery trial, Jude 23 tells the little flock to pull “them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.” A person’s own self-righteousness is described as “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6), while God’s imputed righteousness is described as “fine linen, clean and white” (Revelation 19:8). If members of the little flock decide to follow the Antichrist, they are succumbing to the fiery trial, giving up their garment of righteousness for filthy-rags righteousness. It is the job of the little flock to pull “them out of the fire” by reminding them of the gospel of the kingdom so that they will have God’s righteousness as a garment and survive the refiner’s fire of the tribulation period (Malachi 3:2-4) so that all of the lost sheep of the house of Israel are saved (Romans 11:26).

4:14-15 Being “reproached for the name of Christ” (4:14) comes from the Jewish religious crowd, i.e., the Antichrist and apostate Israel. Matthew 10:17 says that the little flock will be delivered up “to the councils” and will be scourged “in their synagogues.” In referring to this, Luke 6:22 says that they “shall reproach you.” It is no coincidence that Jesus tells the little flock that, when this happens, they are to “leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great” (Luke 6:23). Again, suffering for Christ is linked to joy and glory in God’s eternal kingdom.

At the same time, they need to note that not all suffering will bring them glory. If they “suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody” (4:15), they will incur God’s wrath. The first two activities are associated with Satan. Satan murders their souls by getting them to follow his lie program (John 8:44). He also robs them of their reward in the kingdom (Matthew 6:19 and John 10:1,10). Satan does this by getting apostate Israel to do his bidding, such that they are evildoers and busybodies. They are busybodies in getting unbelieving family members to turn in believing family members (Matthew 10:21), and they are evildoers by killing those people turned in, who will not bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15 and 20:4).

God “is evil spoken of” (4:14) by the Jewish religion. James 2:6-7 says that apostate Israel blasphemes God’s name by oppressing the little flock and bringing them before the judgement seats. Apostate Israel says that the Jewish religion is rich because they are obeying God, and so they kill the poor, little flock, claiming that they are rightfully executing God’s judgement on them. In doing so, they take on God’s name to say that God is concerned about the riches of this world, when God is really only concerned with spiritual riches. Therefore, they blaspheme God’s name. Also, the Antichrist blasphemes “God...,His name...,His tabernacle, and

them that dwell in heaven” by “speaking great things and blasphemies” (Revelation 13:5-6). In other words, the Antichrist blasphemes God by speaking false doctrine, and apostate Israel blasphemes God by applying that false doctrine to the oppression of the little flock of Israel. In both cases, God “is evil spoken of” (4:14) by the Jewish religion.

By contrast, believing Israel’s actions, in suffering reproaches for Christ’s sake, bring glory to God’s name. However, the world does not glorify God for the little flock’s good works until Jesus ushers in God’s kingdom on earth (2:12 and Matthew 5:16). That is because the world has allowed Satan to blind their minds to the truth of “the GLORIOUS gospel of Christ” (II Corinthians 4:4).

4:16 The term “Christian” is used both here and in Acts 11:26, showing that the term is not particular to the dispensation of grace. It refers to any believer following Christ, regardless of dispensation. It would not have been used until after Christ’s death because there was no Christ to follow until then. In fact, Acts 11:26 says that the term was first used at that time. The fact that Peter uses “Christian,” here, shows that I Peter was written after the dispensation of grace began. That does not mean it was written for the grace dispensation. It is just that God needed to complete His Word to Israel to give them instructions for the tribulation period. Therefore, He had Peter write this epistle to help Israel after the rapture of the church, the body of Christ. When the little flock suffers in the tribulation period for being Christlike, i.e., “Christians” (4:16), they bring glory to God.

4:17 This verse says “that judgment must begin at the house of God.” 4:5 says that Jesus “is ready to judge,” and James 5:9 says that “the judge standeth before the door.” The tribulation period, then, marks the beginning of God’s judgment of the world. First, He brings about the tribulation period as a way of judging Israel.

This is described by the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13:24-30,36-43). God says that, if the tares are pulled up before harvest, some of the wheat will be pulled up with them (Matthew 13:29). In other words, it takes the entire seven years of the tribulation period before all the lost sheep of the house of Israel are saved. Then, when the seven years are over, unbelieving Israel is removed from the kingdom, while believing Israel enters God’s eternal kingdom (Matthew 13:41-43). In other words, God uses the tribulation period as a refiner’s fire (Malachi 3:2-4) that brings forth all the believers of Israel. Thus, Israel is judged. This means that, when God’s kingdom on earth begins, all of Israel is saved (Romans 11:26), such that they can be a kingdom of priests to the Gentiles during the millennial reign (Exodus 19:5-6 and Isaiah 61:6).

The end of all those that “obey not the gospel of God” is that they will be cast into “everlasting fire” (Matthew 18:8). When our fleshly minds see the word “obey,” we assume that works are involved in order for Israel to be saved. However, this verse does not say that they are to obey the law. It says that they should obey “the gospel of God.” The way, that they obey the gospel, is by believing it. Romans 6:17-18 says that the result of the Romans obeying “from the heart that form of

doctrine which was delivered unto” them was that they were “made free from sin.” Furthermore, Romans 10:16 says that not obeying the gospel means that they did not believe the report. Also, Hebrews 4:10-11 says that not entering God’s rest comes from not believing. Thus, obeying the gospel of God is done by believing the gospel, not by performing the law ourselves. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Titus 3:5).

4:18 Although all the lost sheep of Israel are saved at the end of the tribulation period, we are told the “the righteous scarcely be saved” (4:18). The reason they just barely make it into the kingdom is because Satan’s deception program reaches its peak during the tribulation period. Jesus said that “many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:5). “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many” (Matthew 24:11). Their deception is so strong that “insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect” (Matthew 24:14). Therefore, God caps the tribulation period at seven years. Otherwise, “there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:22).

Since this is the case with the godly, you can bet dollars to donuts that “the ungodly and the sinner” (4:18) will not appear in the kingdom. Instead, they will be in “outer darkness,” where “there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13).

4:19 “Wherefore” (4:19), the application for Israel is to continue to suffer for Christ’s sake during the tribulation period. Note that the little flock’s suffering during the tribulation period is “according to the will of God” (4:19), which means that people will be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth as a result of their suffering for Christ (I Timothy 2:4). It is the same for us today in the dispensation of grace, as II Timothy 3:12 says that “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution.” Therefore, when the little flock hears apostate Israel tell them that they are not following God because they are not wealthy, they can rest in God’s Word that suffering for Christ is how they “commit the keeping of their souls to” God (4:19).

They do so “as unto a faithful Creator” (4:19). When the word “Creator” is mentioned, people automatically think of Genesis 1. However, that is not what is talked about here. The context is what God does after the tribulation period is over. Isaiah 65:17 says, “Behold, I CREATE new heavens and a new earth.” You may think of the sun, the water, the plants, and the animals as the new creation, but that is not what God is concerned with. God says that He will “create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy” (Isaiah 65:18). As the faithful Creator, God is making “all things new” with His people, Israel (Revelation 21:5). He is taking away their death, sorrow, crying, and pain (Revelation 21:4), and He is replacing those things with life in Christ in the kingdom.

God created a “holy thing” (Luke 1:35), when He began the plan of Israel’s rebirth as Christ’s bride for all eternity. Israel will not be born again officially until Jesus’ second coming when He begins the new covenant with Israel (Acts 3:19-20, Jeremiah 31:31-34, and Hebrews 8:13). This means that God started “that holy

thing” (Luke 1:35) at Jesus’ birth, but it is not fully created until after the tribulation period is over. (“He hath made every thing beautiful in His time” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).) Therefore, it is the job of believing Israel, during the tribulation period, to commit their souls to God, knowing that He is “a faithful Creator” (4:19). That is, He is faithful to make them part of Christ’s bride if they commit their souls to Him, as opposed to committing their souls to the Antichrist by taking the mark of the beast. They commit their souls to Christ “in well doing” (4:19), meaning that they should obey God’s commandments, preach the gospel, and suffer for Christ’s sake.

5 This is a summary chapter to encourage the little flock to endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved. The elders are to feed the flock with sound doctrine for their dispensation, coming from a heart full of charity for the believing remnant (vs. 1-4). The younger believers are to submit to the authority of the elders and humble themselves before God (vs. 5-7). All believers need to recognize that they can avoid being devoured by the devil by remaining steadfast in having faith in God (vs. 8-11). Then, they will have the strength to stand in the tribulation period, even if they are in the heart of the Antichrist’s territory—Babylon (v. 13).

5:1-3 Now, Peter turns his focus to the elders in the little flock. In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus put Peter in charge of the little flock. As such, he is supposed to feed the flock with sound doctrine (John 21:15-17). Peter now exhorts the other elders to “feed the flock of God which is among you” (5:2). The little flock is to be partakers of Christ’s sufferings and His glory to follow (4:13). Peter is the same, but he is also “a witness of the sufferings of Christ” (5:1), which was a requirement to be one of the 12 apostles (Acts 1:21-22), because they would need to lead the rest of the little flock into suffering during the tribulation period. Therefore, in 5:1, Peter is calling upon his authority as an elder to exhort the other elders to do what he has done, which is to feed the flock. The way this is accomplished is by giving them God’s Word to them in their dispensation so that they may have faith in that word and endure unto the end of the tribulation period (Matthew 10:22).

They are to feed the flock of God “willingly” (5:2). Otherwise, they will not be rewarded by God for their service. We see this with Paul, where he says that he has to preach the gospel of grace, because “a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” He will receive a reward if he does this willingly. Otherwise, he will not be rewarded. Because of this, Paul says that he preaches “the gospel of Christ without charge” so that he does not abuse his “power in the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:17-18). In other words, he could take advantage of his position as “the apostle of the Gentiles” (Romans 11:13) by charging for his service. But, because he wants to be rewarded in heaven, rather than on earth, he preaches the gospel without charge.

This ties into Peter’s next point. Because the elders have the “constraint” of being the leaders, they could charge the little flock for their service. Peter says that they should not serve as elders “for filthy lucre” (5:2). The reason is because following after filthy lucre leads to preaching false doctrine. A great example of this is found

in I Samuel 8:3, where Samuel's sons "perverted judgment" because they "turned aside after lucre, and took bribes." That is why Paul says that "the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith" (I Timothy 6:10). Paul also told Titus that "a bishop must be blameless..., not given to filthy lucre" (Titus 1:7), and then he cited "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers..., who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10-11). Therefore, it can be said that the love of money is a major reason why there is so much false doctrine taught in churches today. Therefore, in order to keep false doctrine out and sound doctrine in the little flock, so that they are spiritually fed and endure unto the end of the tribulation period, Peter tells the elders not to oversee the flock of God for filthy lucre.

Next, Peter tells the elders to have "a ready mind." In 3:15, we learned that, for the layperson, "a ready mind" means being able to share the gospel at any time (3:15). For the elder, it means being able to answer questions with sound doctrine at any time, as Titus 1:9 says that the bishop should "be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

They are also not to be proud in their positions as elders (5:3). If they teach out of pride, they will not be good "ensamples to the flock" (5:3). An ensample is internal, while an example is external. Again, this shows that sound doctrine is in view. I Thessalonians 1:6-8 is a good illustration of this. There, we are told that the Thessalonians "were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord." In other words, because they had sound doctrine in their inner man, they expressed this doctrine to others, causing Macedonia and Achaia to follow their ensamples by believing the gospel. Similarly, the elders in Peter's audience will keep the little flock from straying from the truth if they believe sound doctrine and express it to them themselves. Therefore, not only do the elders need to know God's Word to them, but they also need to teach it out of love for the little flock's spiritual condition. Otherwise, they will not be rewarded and may even lead themselves, and the flock of God, astray.

5:4 If the elders know and teach God's Word for their dispensation and they do so out of the right attitude, i.e., doing it willingly, they will "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (5:4), as opposed to the crowns that the Antichrist offers that fade away at the end of the tribulation period when his riches "come to nought" (Revelation 18:17) and Jesus casts him into the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20). The Antichrist is called "the idol shepherd" (Zechariah 11:17). He is a shepherd for Satan, leading people into the lake of fire with him. Contrast this with Jesus.

Jesus shows He is "the good shepherd" (John 10:11) by giving His life so that Israel can enter God's kingdom. He then shows He is the "great shepherd" by making Israel "perfect in every good work to do His will" in the tribulation period (Hebrews 13:20-21). Finally, He is "the chief Shepherd" (5:4) in giving Israel an eternal crown of glory in the kingdom (5:4 and 1:4). Thus, there is a progression of Jesus' work in the little flock, from good to great to chief. The elders, as shepherds

under the chief Shepherd, should feed “the flock of God” (5:2), looking forward to the time when the chief Shepherd will bring them into God’s kingdom.

Note also how the language, here, differs from the language for us today in the dispensation of grace. Because Israel is still under the law and their redemption is still future, they are called “the flock of God” (5:2), and Jesus is their “chief Shepherd” (5:4). Today, in the dispensation of grace, we have already received the atonement (Romans 5:11). Therefore, we are not called sheep today. Rather, we are sons of God (Galatians 4:5-7), and we have the mind of Christ (I Corinthians 2:16).

5:5 “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” is a quotation of Proverbs 3:34. James also quotes this verse in James 4:6. In James 4:5, we are told that the reason for this grace is that “the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy,” which is a quote of Genesis 6:5. This tells us that our sin nature is prideful. That is because envy or pride is what caused man’s fall. Eve took of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because she saw it would make her wise as the gods (Genesis 3:5-6). Pride also caused Lucifer’s fall, as he said, “I will exalt my throne.... I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:12-15). Pride is also what brings the Antichrist to power, as he “shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods” (Daniel 11:36). Therefore, when apostate Israel follows their pride, they show that they are children of the devil (John 8:44).

By giving Israel the law, God wants to show them that there is none righteous and none that doeth good (Psalm 14:1-3). If they humble themselves by recognizing this and believe the gospel of the kingdom, God will give them grace by giving them the Holy Ghost to overcome the sin nature for them (John 14:26). A further help comes from elders, who have already yielded to the Holy Ghost through suffering. Therefore, the “younger” (5:5), not necessarily in physical age but in spiritual age, should submit themselves to the sound doctrine taught by the elders. However, if they have a haughty spirit and do not submit, they will fall, along with apostate Israel, by taking the mark of the beast (Proverbs 16:18).

5:6 Those, who humble themselves “under the mighty hand of God” (5:6), are those who obey God’s word to them, including the sound doctrine given to them by the elders. They are to do this in spite of apostate Israel’s disobedience. They need to be willing to suffer for Christ, knowing that God does, indeed, have a “mighty” (5:6) hand to deliver them from the Antichrist and exalt them in the kingdom. However, this comes “in due time” (5:6), which is at Jesus’ second coming, according to 5:4. This means that the little flock must endure unto the end of the tribulation period in order to be saved (Matthew 24:13), which shows the necessity of humbleness until then. Satan, the Antichrist, apostate Israel, and their own sin natures are foes against them, but God will prevail over these foes, if they have faith in Him to do so. After all, “if God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).

5:7 Jesus said that the religious leaders “bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders” (Matthew 23:4). These are the burdens of

the Jewish religion. Jesus encouraged Israel to get from out of the yoke of the Jewish religion and take His yoke upon them so that their souls will find rest (Matthew 11:29-30). Not only does this “yoke” include casting off the burdens of religion, but it also includes not worrying about the basic necessities of the flesh. Jesus told them not to even think about what they will eat, what they will drink, or what will happen tomorrow. Instead, they are to seek the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:31-34), and let God take care of them. Revelation 12:6,14-16 shows God’s care for them, in that He will save them from Satan’s attacks and nourish them during the Great Tribulation (the last 3 ½ years of the tribulation period). All they need to do is have faith in what God has told them by humbling themselves under God.

5:8-9 By casting all their cares upon Christ, the little flock is sober minded. In other words, they act based upon the sound doctrine for their dispensation, as revealed in the Word of God, rather than based upon their emotions or upon what the Antichrist and apostate Israel tell them. They also need to “be vigilant” (5:8) to guard their minds against the attacks of the Devil. Thus, the devouring that the devil seeks to do of the little flock is of their minds, getting them to stray from having faith in God. If they remain “stedfast in the faith” (5:9), they will not be devoured by the devil. Being “stedfast” means that they keep focused on God’s Word to them. A great illustration of this is found in Psalm 1:2-3. There, the believing remnant is told that if they “delight...in the law of the Lord,” they will be like trees planted by the rivers of water and whatever they do shall prosper.

Jesus warned the little flock about the devil in John 10:12. The “hireling,” there, are the Jewish religious leaders, and the wolf is the devil. The religious leaders do not protect the sheep. Instead, they flee from the truth, and the devil catches and scatters the sheep through the Antichrist and his false, religious system. However, note, from 5:8, that the devil is “as a ROARING lion.” If the little flock is sober, they are thinking clearly. If they are vigilant, they are on guard against the devil. Since the devil roars, if they are sober and vigilant, there is no way he can catch them. However, a roaring lion can scare them, if they make decisions based upon their emotions. That is why the little flock must remain “stedfast in the faith” (5:9). Now, because the devil scared away the hireling (the religious leaders), he was able to scatter the sheep (the believing remnant) among the Gentiles. That is why I Peter is written to the scattered sheep of Israel (1:1).

Even if the little flock does not watch and are in the lion’s mouth, God can still deliver them by faith (II Timothy 4:17). This is seen in the parable of the ten virgins, where the faithful of Israel watch and warn those sleeping, such that the sleeping ones wake up, trim their lamps, and enter the kingdom (Matthew 25:5-10). Of course, if everyone did this, there would be no one watching. Also, the watchers receive a greater reward in the kingdom than the sleepers. Therefore, Peter encourages the little flock to “be sober, be vigilant” (5:8).

A great example of what they should do is found in Daniel in the lion’s den. Daniel was threatened with death (Daniel 6:7) if he continued to obey God’s command to pray toward Jerusalem (I Kings 8:37-39). Yet, he remained stedfast in the faith

(Daniel 6:10). Although he was thrown into the lion's den (Daniel 6:16), no lion touched him (Daniel 6:22). Similarly, the little flock is threatened with death if they do not bow down to the image of the beast (Revelation 13:15). If they remain steadfast in the faith, their souls will not be destroyed (Matthew 10:28), and God will give them eternal life in His kingdom on earth (Revelation 22:5).

Peter also tells the little flock that one way they can remain steadfast in the faith is to know they are not alone (5:9). There is a history of faithful men in Israel (see Hebrews 11). For example, Elijah ran away from Israel, being scared that Jezebel would kill him, being alone in the faith. God encouraged him by telling him that He had saved a remnant of 7,000 people who had not bowed down to Baal (I Kings 19:18). Similarly, the little flock can remain steadfast in their faith in God throughout the tribulation period, knowing that there are other believers all over the world, who are being afflicted by Satan, via the Antichrist and apostate Israel, for not having bowed down to Baal, i.e., the image of the beast (5:9).

Note also that Peter says that "the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are IN THE WORLD" (5:9). The implication is that the little flock also has brethren who are in paradise with God. The point is that they suffered afflictions while they were in the world, but now they are not afflicted any more and will receive glory in God's kingdom. This should encourage the little flock in the tribulation period to follow their examples.

5:10 The grace, that God gives them, is not to take them out from being under the law and putting them under grace, as He does today in the mystery dispensation (Romans 6:14). Rather, God's grace to them is to strengthen them to endure through tribulation and to call to their remembrance the scripture to them so that they will not be devoured by the devil. (This is not unlike the grace that God gave Paul in II Corinthians 12:7-10.)

Note that John 10:12 says that Satan scattered the sheep by corrupting the Jewish religious leaders. He cannot devour the sheep unless the sheep themselves abandon faith in God, because Christ, as the good shepherd (John 10:14), will protect them when they abide in Him (John 15:4-6). He protects them with His grace. The little flock will suffer physically during the tribulation period, but they will receive eternal glory in God's kingdom after the tribulation period is over. The purpose of their trials is to: 1) Make them perfect in relying upon God, 2) Establish them in the faith, 3) Strengthen them to withstand spiritual attacks so that they will rule justly in God's kingdom on earth, and 4) Settle them in God, so that they will be comfortable in God, as part of Christ's bride, in the kingdom, comfortable with who they are in Christ.

5:11 This transformation of believing Israel, with the events of the tribulation period, brings eternal glory to God, because they are perfect, established, strengthened, and settled in God's eternal kingdom (5:10), thanks to God's work in them. God's dominion over the earth will be "for ever and ever" (5:11 and Daniel 2:44), while the Antichrist only has power given unto him to rule over the whole earth for forty-two months (Revelation 13:5). Therefore, whatever the Antichrist

does to them will only be temporary, which means they should not be concerned about it.

5:12 “Silvanus” is probably the Silas, who went on apostolic journeys with Paul, beginning in Acts 15:40. From Acts 15:22, we learn that Silas was a member of the little flock and was with the Jerusalem believers until that time. We mentioned, in 4:16, that I Peter had to have been written after Acts 11:26. Since 5:12 says that Silvanus was faithful to the little flock, we can now say that I Peter was probably written between Acts 11:26 and Acts 15:22, which means that it was written before any of Paul’s epistles were written (which is why Peter only mentions Paul’s writings in his second epistle (see II Peter 3:15)), even though it was written after the mystery dispensation began.

The primary way Satan fools people into believing false doctrine is by being scriptural, but not dispensational. In other words, he uses scripture outside of the current dispensation to get people not to believe the doctrine that is written to them. Today, we see Christianity following Matthew – John, when Paul’s epistles are written to us today. Therefore, when God resumes the prophecy program after the rapture, Satan will get people to focus on Paul’s epistles. Therefore, halfway through the tribulation period, the Antichrist will take away the daily sacrifice and “cast down the truth to the ground” (Daniel 8:11). He will say things like, “the daily sacrifice is not needed because I already made the sacrifice myself. You are not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14).” Therefore, Peter says that what the Antichrist says is not the grace of God. Rather, “the true grace of God” (5:12) to the little flock in the tribulation period is found in Hebrews – Revelation, not in Romans – Philemon. Therefore, Peter closes his epistle by reminding the little flock to be dispensational and understand that his epistle is “the true grace of God” (5:12), written to them for the tribulation period, while the “grace,” that the Antichrist preaches, is written to the body of Christ, not to the little flock of Israel.

5:13 Because I Peter was written after the mystery dispensation had begun, God has set aside Israel, such that Jerusalem is now called “Babylon.” How do we know that Peter is talking about the Jerusalem church? While Babylon was a literal, physical nation, in the Bible, it is mainly God’s name for the counterfeit religious system of Satan. That is why Revelation 17:5 calls Babylon a “mystery” and “the mother of harlots.” Revelation 18:24 tells us that, in her are found the blood of all martyrs. In Matthew 23:35-37, Jesus says that, upon apostate Israel, will come the blood of all martyrs, and He identifies His audience as “Jerusalem.” Therefore, comparing scripture with scripture, we can determine that Babylon is another name for apostate Jerusalem. Therefore, the Antichrist can sit on the throne in the temple in Jerusalem (II Thessalonians 2:4) and rule over Babylon. Finally, Ezekiel 23:15 says that Israel are the natives of Babylon. Since Jerusalem is apostate at the time that Peter wrote this epistle, we can conclude that “the church at Babylon” (5:13) refers to the believing remnant in Jerusalem. This also means that there will be a church at Babylon or Jerusalem during the tribulation period, which is confirmed by Revelation 2:12-13.

Also, although Peter calls “Marcus my son” (5:13), he is not Peter’s physical son. Rather, he is his spiritual son, just like Timothy was Paul’s spiritual son (II Timothy 1:2). People say that Mark penned his gospel with help from Peter, which makes sense, in light of this verse.

5:14 Paul ends a few of his epistles by telling the church to greet one another with “an holy kiss” (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 16:20; II Corinthians 13:12; I Thessalonians 5:26). That is because, since we have already received the atonement in the grace dispensation, we are already holy (Colossians 3:12). In the prophecy dispensation, however, Israel does not receive the atonement until Jesus’ second coming. Therefore, they are not holy yet, which is why Peter tells the little flock to greet “one another with a kiss of charity” (5:14), rather than with “an holy kiss.”

When Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, He told them “peace be unto you” (John 20:21), which was to come to them by receiving the Holy Ghost (John 20:22). Therefore, Peter’s mention of peace, here, means that they should let the Holy Ghost work in them via the doctrine so that they will have inner peace, even though they experience tribulation in the flesh.