

I Pet. 1:22-2:3

- I. Love one another unceasingly (22-25)
 - A. Love one another unceasingly (22) – cf. 4:8, Jn 13:34, Rom 12:10, Heb 13:1
 1. Having purified your souls (22a) –cf. Jms 4:8
 - a. By obedience to the truth – cf. ‘ignorance’ in v. 14 and ‘empty way of life’ in v. 18 as opposed to the ‘gospel that was preached to you’ in v. 12. – cf. 1:2,14, Jn 17:17,19
 - b. For the purpose of sincere love for fellow believers
 2. Therefore love one another (22b)
 - a. From a pure heart
 - b. Unceasingly, continuously

“[unceasingly] with the imperative [love] maintains the emphasis of the three previous imperatives in vv. 13, 15, and 17 on the necessity of fulfilling the commands ‘until the end’ or during the whole of the readers’ allotted lifetime. vv. 23-25 in their turn can be understood as the explanation and elaboration of the [unceasingly] with which v. 22 concludes.” WBC. 76
 - B. Reason- Your salvation is enduring, so your love should be eternal, continual and unceasing (23-25)
 1. You were born again from imperishable seed (23) – cf. 1:3, Jn 1:13, Jn 3:3
 - a. The fact – You were born again(23a)

“Peter explains the experience of new birth here in much the same way that he explained the experience of redemption in vv. 18-19, by means of a contrast between perishable and imperishable things...Just as they were redeemed ‘not with perishable things such as silver or gold’ (v 18), so they were born anew ‘not from the planting of perishable seed but from imperishable.’” WBC. 76
 - b. The means of you being born again (23b-c)
 - 1) Neg. – Not from perishable seed – cf. 1:4, 7, 18, 3:4
 - 2) Pos. – But from imperishable seed – cf. Mk 4:2-9, 14-21, 26-32
 - a) Imperishable
 - b) Through the word of God – cf. Heb 4:12, Dan 6:26
 - (i) Living – “The incorruptible quality of the seed which has been sown is thus accounted for by the living and enduring qualities of the [word]....The word as received [seed] is incorruptible because it reflects the permanence of the word as given by God.” CBQ Vol. 36 p. 92
 - (ii) Enduring – “it is this quality of permanence that requires of Christian believers permanent and unremitting love (v22).” WBC. 77

2. Reason why this is so- (the life matches the seed) (24-25)
 - a. General principle Illustrated by quote from Scripture (Isa. 40:6-8). (24-25a)
 - 1) Negative contrast (24)
 - a) Comparison with perishable plants
 - (i) All flesh (mankind) is like grass (in ways to be defined next)
 - (ii) All the glory of it is like the flower of grass – cf. ‘empty, fruitless’ in v18 as compared to ‘glory’ of vv 7,8 and 11.
 - b) The impermanence of plants – cf. Ps 37:18-20
 - (i) The grass withers
 - (ii) And the flower falls
 - 2) The Positive fact Peter is emphasizing – The word of the Lord remains forever (25a) – cf. Mk 13:31, Mt 5:18
 - b. The Specific point of the quotation – This is the word that was preached to you (25b) – cf. 1:12,20, Isa 40:9

“[Peter] knows that brotherly affection among those who are not literally brothers and sisters is impossible without purification of soul, and that mutual love even in a community of shared belief is impossible without the new birth of which Jesus had spoken in the Gospel tradition. Without these things it is possible to be fond of other individuals and to have a commitment of sorts to a community or a cause. What is always lacking in such cases is that quality of constancy or steadfastness which Peter sums up with the adverb ‘unremittingly.’ The love or brotherly affection of which he speaks is an unremitting, imperishable love, because it has about it something of the nature of ‘the living and enduring God.’” WBC 80

II. Grow in spiritual truth and maturity (1-3)

A. Act like you have been born again (1-2)

‘Therefore’ points back to 1:23 where Peter says they have been born again. He continues this metaphor by telling them to act like figurative newborns in terms of growth, both in putting aside their old life and craving the things of new life.

1. Put off your old way of life (1)

(linked with v.2 as a dependent ptcp, imperatival, but probably logically also means/manner relationship)

Rid yourself of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. – cf. Eph 4:22, Jms 1:21

“Peter then listed five sins of attitude and speech, which if harbored would drive wedges between believers. Malice is wicked ill-will; deceit is deliberate dishonesty; hypocrisy, pretended piety and love; envy, resentful discontent; and slander, backbiting lies. None of these should have any place in those who are born again. Rather, in obedience to the Word, believers are to make decisive breaks with the past.” Bible Knowledge Commentary, en loc

2. Crave the things of your new life (2) – cf. Jms 1:21, Eph 4:23-4

“Warnings against evil attitudes and practices have no point if nothing is provided to take their place. While urging his readers to get rid of all kinds of malice and deceit, Peter stirs in them instead a longing for God, and for all that God has to give.” WBC p. 91

 - a. Crave pure spiritual milk (2a-b) – cf. I Cor. 3:2, Heb 5:12-13
 - 1) Comparison – as newborn infants. (2a) – cf. Mt 18:3

“The metaphor’s point of comparison is not the smallness or innocence of a baby, but its strong and instinctive longing for a mother’s milk.” WBC p. 86

“Like newborn babies does not imply that Peter thought of his readers as young or immature Christians, for some of them had been Christians for thirty years. It only says that they are to long for spiritual milk in the same way that new babies long for milk (eagerly, frequently)....Milk in this context does not represent elementary Christian teaching (as it does in a different metaphor in 1 Cor. 3:2 and Heb. 5:12-13, where milk is contrasted with meat or solid food, but rather something to be eagerly desired for nourishment.” Grudem TNTC p. 94
 - 2) Crave pure spiritual milk. (2b)
 - a) Pure – as contrasted to ‘deceit’ of v.1
 - b) Spiritual – basically reminding that this is a metaphor and not to push the imagery too far. It is spiritual nourishment from God that is the point.
 - c) Milk – refers to the teaching of the word, but it also refers to much more than that, like the baby partakes of the ‘life’ of the mother in milk, we partake and participate in the life of Christ.

“In light of 1:25 there can be no doubt that the medium by which the milk is received is the proclaimed message of the gospel, but the milk itself is more appropriately interpreted as the sustaining life of God given in mercy to his children.” WBC pp. 88-9
 - b. The Purpose – so that you may grow in it into salvation. (2c) – cf. 1:5,9,10, Eph 4:14-16

“[salvation] in our passage points to a vindication arising inevitably, almost ‘naturally,’ out of the spiritual growth that results from receiving ‘pure spiritual milk.’...There is a shift of emphasis between chaps. 1 and 2 but nothing more. The center of interest in 1:3-12 is the hope of final vindication, while in our passage it is the process of spiritual growth that precedes the end. IN neither instance, however, is ‘salvation’ seen as anything other than God’s decisive intervention on behalf of his people ‘at the last day,’ and in neither instance are his people seen as merely waiting passively for their eschatological reward. Rather, they are active participants in the drama of salvation, whether their participation is depicted as having their faith tested and proved genuine in ‘various ordeals’ in pagan society, or as feeding on the life-giving ‘milk’ of God’s mercy for the well-being of their minds and souls.” WBC pp. 89-90

“Salvation is seen not as a last minute rescue operation from the outside but as the fitting consummation of a process already at work in and among Christian believers.” WBC p. 91

B. Reason – You have experienced that the Lord is good. (3) – cf. Ps 34:8, Eph 4:21, Mt 11:29

In the form of a condition “If you have...”, challenging the reader with the opposite possibility. But most likely an assumed condition “Since you have...” giving reason. Not all of the benefits of the Christian are future, we have indeed experienced the kindness and goodness of Christ. We are reminded of this past experience as a motivation to continue to crave the things of God, and in so doing, continue to experience His goodness and continue to grow into the consummating experience of His goodness, our salvation.

“Once a person has come to taste the graciousness and goodness of the Lord, he should have a continuing appetite for spiritual food.” EBC 12.228