

1 Peter 2 - The Spiritual State of the Remnant and Non-Remnant; Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence; Conduct of Believers

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1 Peter 2:1-10: A Cornerstone of Replacement Theology

After establishing that Peter is addressing believing Jews (the Remnant) dispersed from the Land and living among majority Gentiles, Peter draws a contrast between the Remnant and the non-Remnant (2:1-10). His purpose is to show that while the non-Remnant has failed in its calling, the Remnant has not failed. Throughout Scripture, there are always two Israels: Israel the whole that comprises all Jews; and, Israel the Remnant that comprises only believing Jews. Here, Peter distinguishes between the Remnant and the non-Remnant. Replacement Theology, however, relies on this passage as proof that the true Israel is the church. The following are two examples:

So in v4-10 Peter says that God has bestowed on the church almost all the blessings promised to Israel in the Old Testament. The dwelling place of God is no longer the Jerusalem temple, for Christians are the new "temple" of God (see notes on v5). The

priesthood able to offer acceptable sacrifices to God is no longer descended from Aaron, for Christians are now the true "royal priesthood" with access before God's throne (v4-5,9). God's chosen people are no longer said to be those physically descended from Abraham, for Christians are now the true "chosen race" (v9). The nation blessed by God is no longer the nation of Israel, for Christians are now God's true "holy nation" (v9). The people of Israel are no longer said to be the people of God, for Christians—both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians—are now "God's people" (v10a) and those who have "received mercy" (v10b). Moreover, Peter takes these quotations from contexts which repeatedly warn that God will reject his people who persist in rebellion against him, who reject the precious "cornerstone" which he has established. What more could be needed in order to say with assurance that the church has now become the true Israel of God? [Grudem, p. 113.]

Having shown how "the stone" divides believers from unbelievers (including the persecutors of these Christian readers), our author returns to the topic of their privileged position in God's temple, using the emphatic "but you" to make the transition and contrast clear. This position is described by transferring to the church the titles of Israel in the OT (for the church is the true remnant of Israel, as the use of Israel's titles from 1:1 on indicates), in particular the titles found in the Septuagint of Ex 19:5-6 (Cf. 23:22) and Is 43:20-21 (Cf. Deut 4:20; 7:6; 10:15; 14:2):

Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel." (Ex 19:5-6)

"The animals of the field will glorify Me, The jackals and the ostriches, Because I have given waters in the wilderness And rivers in the desert, To give drink to My chosen people. "The people whom I formed for Myself Will declare My praise. (Is 43:20-21)

These titles, which are used elsewhere in the NT as well, particularly in Revelation (Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Cf. 1 Peter 2:5), are woven together with a phrase taken first from Exodus ("But you"), then from Isaiah ("chosen people"), then Exodus again ("royal priesthood" and "holy nation"), and finally Isaiah ("God's own people...deeds," the grammar changed to suit the new context in 1 Peter), indicating a long period of meditation on and use of these texts in the church. The emphasis throughout is collective: the church as a corporate unity is the people, priesthood, nation, etc., rather than each Christian being such. This emphasis is typical of the NT in contrast to our far more individualistic concern in the present. The West tends to focus on individuals relating to God, while Peter (and the rest of the NT, i.e., Paul's body-of-Christ language) was more conscious of people's becoming part of a new corporate entity that is chosen by and that relates to God. [Dands, p. 90-91]

1 Peter 2

(E) Progress (2:1-3)

(a) Put away sins hindering relationships (2:1)

1 Therefore, rid *yourselves* of all **malice** and all **deceit** and **hypocrisy** and **envy** and all **slander**,

1 Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander,

1 Therefore, rid yourselves of every kind of evil and deception, hypocrisy, jealousy, and every kind of slander.

1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

- In dealing with the Remnant and non-Remnant, Peter begins by describing the spiritual state of the Remnant

- "Therefore" - what Peter is about to say is based on the previous segment (1:23-25) concerning the eternal word of God

— He then lists some attitudes and actions that are to be rejected or "put away." He views these actions as "old clothing" that must be stripped from the body and thrown away because they have become thoroughly useless and badly stained.

- "...malice" - *kakian*, wicked ill-will; the desire to inflict pain, harm, or injury on our fellow man

- "...deceit" - *dolon*, deliberate dishonesty, falsehood, craft, seduction, cunning, and treachery

— Operationally, it is the antithesis of being a fiduciary (see notes on Eph 6:4-9)

— Deceit and hypocrisy are twins: by deceit a person is wronged; by hypocrisy he is deceived

- "...hypocrisy" - *hypokriseis*, pretended piety and love; all forms of pretense

— Pretending to be what one is not; a man with a double heart and a lying tongue

— As Jesus quoted Isaiah to the Pharisees (Matt 15:7-8, quoting Is 29:13)

- "...envy" - *phthonous*, resentful discontent; a feeling of displeasure when hearing of blessing or prosperity for others

- "...slander" - *katalalias*, backbiting lies, slander; misuse of the tongue; speech that degrades another person (Cf. 2 Cor 12:20)

— 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. See [Gossip](#) for more detail.

(b) Be nourished by God's Word (2:2-3)

2 and like newborn babies, long for the **pure** milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,

2 Like newborn babies, thirst for the pure milk of the word so that by it you may grow in your salvation.

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

- Peter now lists what must be sought to replace those things that are to be "put away" (v1)

- After believers cast out impure desires and motives (v1), they then need to feed on wholesome *spiritual* food that produces growth

- He describes believers as "newborn babes," meaning they are newly born again

- As is always true, new believers need spiritual milk, which are the basics of God's Word

- Just as in newborn babies, this milk is needed by new believers in order to grow spiritually. As newborn babes, their life depends on the next feeding!

- The purpose of the believers' present spiritual growth is to move them toward their future salvation in all of its fullness. Essentially, it is for the new believer to grow toward maturity so that they can begin to partake of the meat of God's Word.

- "...pure" - *adolon*, unadulterated; it's deliberately contrasted with "deceit" [*dolon*] in v1

- The instruction is to get rid of deceit, and then replace it with the pure milk of the Word of God

- God's Word does not deceive; neither should God's children

- Christians should approach the Word with clean hearts and minds (v1) in eager anticipation, with a desire to grow spiritually

3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

3 if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

3 Surely you have tasted that the Lord is good!

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

- Quoting Ps 34:8, Peter continues the milk analogy used in v2 and likened their present knowledge of Christ to tasting

- They had taken a sample, having experienced God's grace in their new birth, and had found that indeed *the Lord is gracious*

- The yearning for milk is to be based on past experience: they have already tasted that the Lord is good. This should encourage them to continue partaking of the milk until they are ready to begin partaking of the meat.

The spiritual state of the Remnant is characterized as "newborn babes" in need of the milk of God's Word. The milk will enable them to continue growing until they are ready to partake of the meat.

(F) Priesthood (2:4-9a)

4 And coming to Him as to a **living stone** which has been **rejected by people**, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

4 And coming to Him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God,

4 As you come to him, the living stone who was rejected by people but was chosen and precious in God's sight,

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

- "...living stone" - a "prepared stone" such as those used in the construction of a building
— Jesus is the Messianic Stone of the OT

- "...rejected by people" - Jesus was rejected by men; this rejection was prophesied in Ps 118:22 and fulfilled in Matt 21:42-44; Mark 11:10-11; Luke 20:17-18; Acts 4:11

— Christ was rejected by men, but God chose Him (Cf. 1 Peter 1:20) and held Him precious (Cf. 1 Peter 1:19; 2:4,7)

- However theologians may wrangle on the meaning of the Lord's words in Matt 16, Peter understood them:

— The Rock is Christ Himself, the Living Stone. Peter never indicated an understanding that he himself was the "rock" Jesus referred to. Every believer is also a living stone (v5)—made so by grace.

- Here Peter says this Stone is "living"; it has life in itself and gives life to others. People may enter into personal, vital relationships with this "Living Stone."

- Here Peter used a unique figure of speech:

- In 1:3 he referred to a "living hope"
- In 1:23 to the "living...Word"
- In 2:4 he refers to Christ as "the living Stone"

5 you also, as **livingstones**, are being **builtup** as a **spiritualhouse** for a **holypriesthood**, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

5 you, too, as living stones, are building yourselves up into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, so that you may offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus, the Messiah.

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

- "...living stones" - living stones; in contrast to the Living Stone (the Messiah), Peter refers to Jewish believers as "living stones," because they are saved, have become partakers of

Christ's living nature, and are part of a "spiritual house"

- "...built up" - this is a present, continuing reality because the Remnant of Israel is in the process of being "built up" into a "spiritual house"

- "...spiritual house" - the House of Israel, the Remnant of Israel; Paul called them "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16); these are Jewish believers, not the Church

- "...holy priesthood" - another identity of Jewish believers

- "holy" - set apart as belonging to God

- "priesthood" - *hierateuma*, in the NT, used only here and in v9; in the LXX, it is used only 2x (Ex 19:6; 23:22), where it is used to describe Israel as a royal priesthood

- The job of a priest is to offer up spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. God is the object. The sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, portray Jesus as the Mediator.

- Peter does not elaborate on what these sacrifices that are acceptable to God include, but other passages do: they include the living sacrifices of the body (Rom 12:1-2), praise (Heb 13:15), self-dedication (Eph 5:1-2, Phil 2:17), good deeds (Heb 13:16), and material possessions that are given over for service to God (Phil 4:18; Heb 13:16).

- Peter's point is that only Jewish believers—only the Remnant—have fulfilled Israel's original calling to be a kingdom of priests as described in Ex 19:6. The rest of Israel, the non-Remnant, has failed.

- Interpreters who ignore the context have often used this verse in an attempt to teach that the kingdom of priests is inclusive of the whole Church. However, the doctrine of "the priesthood of all believers" cannot be supported from this verse. Peter is speaking specifically of Jewish believers in this context. It is a fact that all believers are a spiritual priesthood, but this fact is based on Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6, not 1 Peter 2.

- Peter states that Jewish believers, because of the "new salvation" they have, are two things:

1. Living stones - part of a spiritual house—this "spiritual house" is the Remnant of Israel, the "Israel of God" (Cf. Gal 6:16)
2. Holy priesthood - this was the calling of the nation as a whole (Ex 19:5-6). The nation failed, but the Remnant of Israel has not failed, and today are offering "spiritual sacrifices" to the Lord.

Distinction Between Remnant vs non-Remnant

6 For *this* is contained in Scripture: "BEHOLD, I AM LAYING IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, **A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE**, AND THE ONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM **WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME.**"

6 For *this* is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."

6 This is why it says in Scripture: "Look! I am laying a chosen, precious cornerstone in Zion. The one who believes in him will never be ashamed."

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believes on him shall not be confounded.

- After pointing out that Jewish believers are living stones and a holy priesthood, Peter now begins to draw a distinction between the Remnant and the non-Remnant

- He describes the state of the Remnant in v6-7a, and the state of the non-Remnant in v7b-8...

- Peter quotes Is 28:16...in the context of this passage, the prophet makes a distinction between the Remnant and the non-Remnant

- "...A PRECIOUS CORNERSTONE" - *akrogōniaios*, the "stone" idiom Peter used earlier is now the "chief cornerstone" (Cf. Eph 2:20). It refers to a stone at the extreme corner, which controls the foundation lines of a building.

- A cornerstone points to the visible support on which the rest of the building relies for strength and stability

- "...WILL NOT BE PUT TO SHAME" - they will never be ashamed due to a failure on the part of the Stone; the Stone will never fail them

- The Greek double negative used here in the subjunctive mood indicates an emphatic (intense) negative assertion referring to the future: never, indeed ever, will those who believe on Him be ashamed

- So Peter encourages his readers with a sure scriptural promise of ultimate victory for those who trust Christ

Is 28:16: Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: "Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion, a tested stone, A precious cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. The one who believes *in it* will not be disturbed.

7 This precious value, then, is **for you** who believe; but for unbelievers, "A STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS **REJECTED**, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF **CORNERSTONE**,"

7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner *stone*,"

7 Therefore he is precious to you who believe, but to those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

- "...for you" - in the emphatic position in the Greek: "For you" (the Jewish Remnant), the Stone is precious

- In v7b, Peter begins to describe the non-Remnant (unbelieving Israel)
- Peter's second quotation is from Ps 118:22, which shows the predicted rejection of the Stone
- Jesus also quoted Ps 118:22, in the presence of Peter, in reference to His rejection by the chief priests and Pharisees (Matt 21:42-46)
- "...rejected" - disallowed; to be disapproved
- Jesus was "disapproved" by the leadership of Israel, who were the "builders"
- "...CORNERSTONE" - even though Jesus, as the Stone, was disapproved of by the leaders, God overruled the rulers and designated Him to be the head of the corner
- The fulfillment of this will occur with the Second Coming and the Messianic Kingdom

These verses present a sharp contrast between those who believe (Remnant) and those who do not (non-Remnant): Christ is "precious," of ultimate value, to those who believe, but those who have rejected Christ stumble (v8) because of their disobedience.

Ps 118:22: A stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.

Matt 21:42-46:

42 Jesus *said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'A STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"

43 Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit.

44 And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and on whomever it falls, it will crush him."

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.

46 And *although* they sought to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, since they considered Him to be a prophet.

8 and, "A **STONE OF STUMBLING** AND A **ROCK OF OFFENSE**"; for they stumble because they are **disobedient** to the word, and to this they were also appointed.

8 and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this *doom* they were also appointed.

8 a stone they stumble over and a rock they trip on." They keep on stumbling because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

- Peter's third quotation is from Is 8:14...the context of which also distinguishes between the Remnant and non-Remnant
- "...STONE OF STUMBLING" - Jesus was the Stone against which one accidentally strikes and injures himself
- "...ROCK OF OFFENSE" - a trap set to trip someone up, causing a large boulder to fall on him
- Peter's point is that by rejecting God's Stone, the non-Remnant bring upon themselves the injury of the Stone and the ruin of the Rock
 - When tripping over the stone, one simply injures himself. However, when a big boulder lands on top of a person, it kills him
 - The non-Remnant stumbled over the Messiahship of Jesus and, as a result, the boulder falls on them and crushes them. This is a reference to the coming 70 AD judgment.
- "...disobedient" - the non-Remnant stumbled because they were disobedient to the Word; furthermore, since they were non-elect, they were appointed for this (stumbling)
 - Those who rejected the Word (the non-Remnant) were destined to stumble at the Stone of stumbling

Is 8:14: "Then He will become a sanctuary; But to both houses of Israel, *He will be* a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, *And* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Christ, the Rock

1. Smitten that the Spirit of life may flow from Him to all who will drink (Ex 17:6; 1 Cor 10:4; John 4:13-14; 7:37-39)
2. To the Church, the foundation and chief corner **Stone** (Eph 2:20)
3. To the Jews, at His 1st Coming, a "stumbling **stone**" (Rom 9:32-33; 1 Cor 1:23)
4. To national Israel, at His 2nd Coming, "the **headstone** of the corner" (Zech 4:7)
5. To the Gentile world powers, the smiting "**Stone** cut without hands" (Dan 2:34)
6. In the Divine Purpose, the **Stone** which, after the destruction of Gentile world powers, is to grow and fill the earth (Dan 2:34)
7. To unbelievers, the crushing **Stone** of judgment that will grind those to powder (Matt 21:44)

(G) Proclamation (2:9b-10)

The Status of the Remnant; A Cornerstone of Replacement Theology

9 But you are A CHOSEN PEOPLE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION, so that **you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness** into His marvelous light;

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be his very own and to proclaim the wonderful deeds of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

- Peter is loosely quoting from Ex 19:5-6...the context for Ex 19:5-6 is that God is speaking to a redeemed, non-sanctified people. We know that the Israelites who were saved out of Egypt were redeemed (Cf. Ex 14:31). They are also included in the Hall of Faith (Heb 11). But they don't act saved...constantly complaining and doubting God.

— So God brought them to Mount Sinai and gave them the Law. The purpose was not to redeem Israel (they were already redeemed), it was to show God's redeemed people how they were supposed to interact with God (commandments #1-4), with each other (commandments #5-10), and how they should related to the unsaved world around them (Ex 19:5-6).

- "But you" - a clear contrast with those (the non-Remnant) just described

— In contrast to Jewish unbelievers, believing Jews (the Remnant) will actually be the benefactors of the OT blessings decreed for the nation of Israel through faith in Christ

- Peter adds four descriptions to contrast the Remnant with Israel as a whole (the non-Remnant). These four descriptives are not being transposed upon the Church, but instead are being reiterated to Jewish believers within the Church.

- "...CHOSEN PEOPLE" - also translated "elect race"; based on Is 43:20

— Being "elect" shows they were chosen at God's initiative (2:4,6); this is a reference to their individual election; "race" shows that Peter is also dealing with their national election

— The Church is not a "race"...it is composed of believers from all races. However, the Jewish people are a race in the biblical sense, and Jewish believers are the "elect race."

- "...A royal PRIESTHOOD" - the Remnant is called "a holy priesthood" in v5, emphasizing their right to approach the heavenly sanctuary; now, they are also a "royal priesthood"

— A "royal priesthood" is an oxymoron to a Jew...kings & priests were separate offices, never to be combined

— At Sinai, God told Moses to tell the people, "You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex 19:6)

— Just like Christ, who is a Priest King after the Order of Melchizedek (Heb 7:1-28), these believers, as "a royal priesthood," are both priests and kings

- For now, they are functioning as priests (Heb 13:15-16), but in the future they will function as kings, exercising royal authority in the Messianic Kingdom (Rev 5:10; 20:6)
- While all believers constitute a priesthood, the priesthood of all believers cannot be derived from this passage; rather, the concept of the believer's priesthood is taught in Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6
- "...A HOLY NATION" - some use this verse to support the idea that the Church is a nation. However, this argument incorrectly assumes that 1 Peter was written to the Church at large rather than merely to the believing Jews in the *Diaspora*.
- Israel became a nation at Mt Sinai, and became holy through their separation from the whole of humanity
- The nation as a whole failed, but the Remnant has not failed
- The Church is not a nation; rather, it is comprised of believers from all nations. Paul specifically calls the church a non-nation (Rom 10:19; Cf. notes on Matt 21:43)
- This verse contains four singular nouns: "race," "priesthood," "nation," and "a people." Since this is the case, it's a very poor description of the Church...the Church at large consists of all races, not a single race; the Church consists of all nations, not a single nation; the Church consists of all people, not a single people.
- If Peter was writing to the Church, he would not use these singular nouns. However it would make a lot of sense for him to use singular nouns if was addressing a narrow audience.
- Peter is addressing a race of people (Jews) in the *diaspora*. If Peter is using this verse to describe the Church, he would flunk basic ecclesiology because His description of the Church here does not coincide with Paul's description in his epistles.
- "...A PEOPLE FOR GOD'S OWN POSSESSION" - this reference is based on Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Is 43:21; Mal 3:17
- Through Abraham, the Jews became a people and, during the time of Moses, they became a nation
- The Remnant is God's own possession as believers because they were purchased by the blood of the Messiah and belong uniquely to God (1:18-19)
- "...you may proclaim the excellencies of Him" - the purpose of God in electing the Remnant (Cf. Is 43:20-21)
- The Remnant is to "show forth" ("make widely known") the excellencies or the attributes of the God who called them to those outside
- God's purpose in choosing believers for Himself is so that they may declare the praises of Him before others
- "excellencies" - *aretos*, used 4x in the NT (Phil 4:8; 2 Peter 1:3,5); could also be translated "eminent qualities," "praises," or "virtues"; it refers to all of God's attributes

- They are to serve as witnesses of the glory and grace of God, who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light
- Reason: Hypocrisy, making extraordinary claims while living ordinary lives
- "...who has called you" - a reference to the point of salvation; theologically, the "effectual calling"
- "...darkness" - His "marvelous light" now illumines the Remnant; previously, they were in the "darkness"
- Peter explains this figure in the next verse with a quotation from Hosea 2:23

Kingdom Now has a field day with 1 Peter 2...after all, if Israel is a "kingdom of priests" in the OT, and these same verses are applied to the Church in the NT, then the Church is also a kingdom of priests. Therefore, the Church is the present manifestation of the kingdom of God on the earth. This application is based purely on the fact that 1 Peter is in the NT instead of the OT, not on any specific reference to the "Church" in 1 Peter that equates them as Israel. This is the majority view in Christendom today, especially among the "Reformed" camp, Kingdom Now, amillennialists, post-millennialists, the Roman Catholic Church, and many denominations. They say Peter uses this Messianic, royal language because the Church has inherited Israel's status as the people of God.

There is no doubt that clear OT language (drawn from Is 43:20; Ex 19:5-6) in relation to Israel is used in 1 Peter 2. These terms include: "a chosen race," "a royal priesthood," "a holy nation," "a people for God's own possession" (v9). However, since Peter is writing to "the Israel of God" or Jewish believers, he is listing these OT descriptions of Israel to let them know that everything promised them in the OT is being fulfilled through their faith in Jesus as their Messiah. This is juxtaposed by a comparison with unbelieving Jews who have not trusted Jesus as the Messiah of Israel in v7-8.

So how do we explain the language used in these verses? Very simply, there's another, markedly different reason for Peter's application of the Messianic terminology to the Church. Peter was writing this epistle to *Jewish* Christians. He was using language to remind them that they have a rich heritage as the believing Remnant of Israel (the "Israel of God," Gal 6:16), and that they are a vital link between Israel and the Church.

While most commentators today don't take this view (that Peter was addressing his fellow Jewish believers in this letter), it turns out that it is well attested all the way back to the earliest days of church history. A substantial number of ancient writers concluded that 1 Peter was addressed to Jewish believers: Origin, Calvin, Bengel, Weiss, Alford, English, Wuest, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus, Andreas and Occumenius. The *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* states, "With few exceptions, the Fathers believed that this letter was written by the apostle Peter and sent to Jewish Christians in the *Diaspora*." Others have pointed out the strong Jewish "coloring" of 1 Peter, arguing that his use of the LXX in

the OT quotations and the thrust of Peter's argument would make this letter largely unintelligible to Peter's readers if they included Gentiles. Plus, as Paul points out, Peter was specifically designated as the apostle to the circumcision (Jews) (Gal 2:7-8).

To summarize, Peter is not drawing a distinction between Israel and the Church, or unbelieving Jews and believing Gentiles. The distinction is between Jews who believe (the Remnant) and Jews who do not believe (the non-Remnant). ***His point is that while Israel as a whole failed, the believing Remnant of Israel has not failed and so the Remnant of Israel is fulfilling the calling of the nation as a whole.*** Paul makes the same theological point in Rom 9-11. See [The Coming Kingdom 70 Kingdom Now Passages: Col 4:11; Heb 12:28; 1 Peter 2:9](#) for additional notes and arguments supporting the dispensational position, and Peter's original audience being Jewish believers.

10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had NOT RECEIVED MERCY, but now you have RECEIVED MERCY.

10 for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

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.

- Peter refers to Hosea 1:10-2:1; 2:23; in the context of Hosea, the prophet is speaking of national Israel

— One of Gomer's (Hosea's prostitute wife) children was name "Lo-Ammi," which means "not My people" in Hebrew (Hosea 1:9). The child was given this name since he was the offspring of her harlotry, not from Hosea.

— Since Hosea is a type of God in that book, the message is that not all of the children of Israel are His offspring. They were still part of national Israel (racially/ethically), but were unbelievers.

— Positionally, Israel is always the "people of God," but experientially they may not experience the benefits of this position due to disobedience

— For a period of time during the time Hosea prophesied, Israel was experientially *not my people*, although in the future, they will repent and become *my people* again. Peter applies this OT passage to the Remnant.

- Peter contrasts their former state with their present state:

— Formerly, they were members of the non-Remnant. Externally, they were not my people and, internally, they had no divine mercy.

— Presently, they have externally become my people and, internally, they have obtained mercy

- In the future, when Israel undergoes a national salvation, they will again experientially become my people
- What will be true of Israel as a nation in the future is true of the Remnant of Israel in the present: they have experientially become God's people again because they are members of the believing Remnant

This is a favorite passage for those who teach Replacement Theology. They teach that what the OT stated to be true of Israel, Peter now applies and states to be true of the Church. Thus, they conclude that the Church has replaced Israel. However, there is no hint in the epistle that Peter is addressing the Church as a whole. On the contrary, in the epistle's introduction (1:1-2), he stated that he was addressing Jewish believers who specifically comprised what was the Remnant of Israel—the Israel of God. Peter's point is that while Israel as a whole failed to fulfill its calling, the Remnant of Israel has *not* failed to fulfill its calling.

Some interpretations from replacement theologians on v9-10:

"This position is described by transferring to the church the titles of Israel in the OT (for the church is the true remnant of Israel, as the use of Israel's titles from 1:1 on indicates)."

[Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), p. 93.]

God's chosen people are no longer said to be those physically descended from Abraham, for Christians are now the true 'chosen race'.... What more could be needed in order to say with assurance that the church has now become the true Israel of God. [Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, *Tyndale New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), p. 113.]

Peter proceeds to apply title after title conferred on the old Israel to the church as the new Israel of God.... Nothing could show more clearly than these two verses the claim of the early Christian church to be the true people of God, heir to all the promises made to the old Israel. [Archibald M. Hunter, "The First Epistle of Peter," *The Interpreter's Bible in Twelve Volumes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), vol. 12; pp.110–11.]

If one understands the audience Peter is writing to, it is abundantly clear that this passage does not support any form of replacement theology. Instead it speaks of a fulfillment of God's OT promises to the Israel of God through Christ, not a replacement of Israel by the Church. God will indeed keep all His promises to Israel even though during the Church age He is combining elect Jews and Gentiles into a single co-equal body (Eph 2:11–22). If the NT actually taught replacement theology, there would need to be a clear statement of just such a doctrine. However, no clear teaching of this nature appears, in spite of the many inferences by interpreters. In addition, the Apostle Paul teaches just the opposite in Rom 9–11.

II. Submission: duty of the Christian (1 Peter 2:11—3:12)

(1) Reason for submission (2:11-12)

11 Beloved, I urge you as **foreigners and strangers** to **abstain** from **fleshly lusts**, which wage war against the soul.

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

11 Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and exiles to keep on abstaining from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

- "Beloved" - introduces a new section, and shows he is addressing believers

- "...foreigners and strangers" - Peter again points out that they are strangers and pilgrims; they really are in two senses: (1) by the fact that they are in the *diaspora*, living outside of their homeland; and, (2) by the fact that they are believers, whose "real" home is in heaven

— "foreigners" - living in a foreign country with no legal rights as citizens

— "strangers" - temporary residents living in a place that is not their own personal home

— It is their separation from non-Remnant, as Jewish believers, that has made them both "strangers and pilgrims"

— Those who are loved by God are exhorted to live as strangers, aliens (*paroikous*, "those who live in a place that is not their home")

— Strangers in the world (Cf. Gen 23:4; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:9,13; 1 Peter 1:17) as opposed to the "earth dwellers" described in Revelation

- "...abstain" - *apechesthai*, is literally "hold oneself constantly back from"

— Christians are to resist the sinward pull of those worldly desires which war against their spiritual lives (Cf. James 4:1)

— Just as their Christian values and beliefs are rejected by the world, so they are to live apart from the immorality and sinful desires that surround them (Cf. 4:3)

— In this real spiritual battle, the demonic strategy is to attack believers at their weakest points...and their strongest point

- "...fleshly lusts" - enumerated by Paul in Gal 5:19-21

As believers, we have 3 enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil

- We can reject the world, isolate ourselves
- We can cast out demons, we can cast out Satan
- But the flesh is always with us...we war against the flesh on a daily basis

12 Keep your **behavior excellent** among the **Gentiles**, so that in the thing in which they **slander** you as **evildoers**, they may because of your **good** deeds, as they observe them,

glorify God **on the day of visitation**.

12 Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

12 Continue to live such upright lives among the gentiles that, when they slander you as practicers of evil, they may see your good actions and glorify God when he visits them.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- The negative exhortation of v11 is now followed by positive instruction in v12...

- "...behavior" - the day-by-day pattern of life

- Christians are to abstain from sinful desires not only for their own spiritual well-being, but also in order to maintain an effective testimony (witness) before unbelievers

- A positive Christian lifestyle is a powerful means of convicting the world of its sin (Cf. Matt 5:16)

- "...excellent...good" - Peter used the word good (*kalos*, translated as both "excellent" and "good") in this verse to define both Christians' lives (behavior) and their works

- Before the critical eyes of slanderous people and their false accusations, the "good deeds" of believers can glorify God and win others to belief (Cf. Matt 5:16; Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 6:20)

- "...Gentiles" - *ethnos*, nations, non-Jews; many commentators who do not understand that Peter was writing this epistle to Jewish believers interpret the word "Gentile" to mean "unbeliever"

- Gentile is only used 1x in the NT to denote a "non-believer" (1 Cor 12:2); that interpretation is obvious by the context of that verse. Everywhere else the word is used, it means a non-Jew (Rom 3:29; 9:24,30-31; 11:11-13,25; 15:27). It is sometimes used of believing Gentiles (Rom 11:11-15; 15:25-27).

- When a Jew uses the term "Gentile," he does not mean "unbeliever," he means a "non-Jew"

- So there is no exegetical basis to use the term to denote a non-believer, so it's best to take it in its common, primary meaning (non-Jew)

- Peter's point, if this verse is interpreted properly, in context, is that Jewish believers living among Gentiles should model a certain lifestyle. Their lives should be such that even if they are called evildoers by the (unbelieving) Gentiles, these unbelievers will still be able to see the Jewish believers' good works.

- "...slander" - *katalaleō*, to speak against, to revile, or to turn others against them

- As believers, their separation from pagan practice causes Gentiles to speak evil of them

- "...evildoers" - *kakopoios*, a criminal; one whose deeds are punishable by the law (Cf. John 18:30)

— When believers are misunderstood and slandered, they should not respond in kind. The proper response is for the Jewish believers to practice purity in their conduct. As a result of their pure conduct, many of these Gentiles will become believers and they, too, will glorify God.

- "...glorify God on the day of visitation" - because the Jewish believers live a spiritual lifestyle that is seemly among the Gentiles, these Gentiles will eventually glorify God "in the day of visitation"

— The spiritual lifestyle lived by these Jewish believers will lead many of these Gentiles to belief in the Messiah. The Gentiles will see the good works that are a result of the Jewish believers' faith and will also believe.

(2) Submission to the state (2:13-17)

(A) Requirement of submission (2:13-14)

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every **human institution**, whether to a king as the one in authority,

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,

13 For the Lord's sake submit yourselves to every human authority: whether to the king as supreme,

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

- "Submit" - we are all called to submit to others in Scripture:

- Church members are to submit to faithful pastors (Heb 13:17)
- Everyone is to submit to government authorities (Rom 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14)
- Everyone is to submit to God (James 4:7)
- Wives are to submit, to their own husbands (Eph 5:22; 1 Peter 3:1)

- "...human institution" - Christians are responsible to obey the law (Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1-2)

— Peter exhorted his readers to abide by governmental laws, to submit...to every ordinance of man (*ktisei*) lit., "creation" or here "institution" or "law," "made by man, human."

— Because the laws are good? - No...they may not be. But to maintain our witness.

— The motivation for obedience is not avoiding punishment but is for the Lord's sake

— To honor God, who ordained human government, Christians are to observe man-made laws carefully as long as those laws do not conflict with the clear teaching of Scripture (Cf. Acts 4:19)

14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

14 or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

14 or to governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right.

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

- Human governments are divine institutions that God has appointed to punish the evildoers and to avenge on behalf of the victim

— Peter made no exception based upon various types of government. At the time Peter wrote his epistle, the government was an autocracy ruled by the Roman Emperor Nero under whom Peter would eventually be martyred. Regardless of the type of government under which a believer lives, he must subject himself to that government.

— The only allowable point of conflict occurs when the government asks the believer to do something contrary to God's law. In fact, if asked to perform an action contrary to God's law, even Peter would disobey (Acts 4:19; 5:29).

This section of Peter's argument leads many to believe that the organized persecution through oppressive Roman laws either had not begun or had not yet reached the provinces of Asia Minor. Christians were then facing lies and verbal abuse, not torture and death, and were still enjoying the protection of a legal system which commended those who obeyed the law. So a believer's best defense against slanderous criticism was good behavior. Before the time of Nero, a time of widespread Christian persecution, the Romans would conquer various nations/cities. After conquering, all they really wanted was peace. They allowed the conquered people to maintain their culture and religion, for the most part. Paul's enemies, in order to get him in trouble, would complain to the Roman leaders that Paul (or other Christians) were stirring up trouble.

(B) Results of submission (2:15-17)

15 For such is the will of God, that by doing right you **silence** the **ignorance** of foolish people.

15 For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

15 For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

- Paul gives three reasons for submission:

1. It is God's will

2. Through believers' "well doing" they will "put to silence" the ignorant who accuse them of lawlessness; essentially, the verbal attacks against believers (v12), prompted by the ignorance of foolish men, will be silenced.

3. See v16

- "...silence" - that through excellent behavior they *silence* (*phimoun*, lit., "muzzle") the ignorant talk of foolish men.

- "...ignorance" - *aphrōn*, a different word than used in 1:14 (*agnoia*), which means intellectual failure

— Here, *aphrōn* refers to a religious failure, a failure to understand the true nature of the faith. The word agnostic derives from this Greek word.

16 Act as free people, and do not use your freedom as a **covering** for evil, but use it as bond-servants of God.

16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God.

16 Live like free people, and do not use your freedom as an excuse for doing evil. Instead, be God's servants.

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

- While they are living in freedom, which is also their spiritual status (John 8:36; Gal 5:1), this freedom does not release them from the subjection to the state, nor does it permit them to use their freedom as a guise or veil ("cloke") for wickedness.

- "...covering" - *epikalymma*, veil; cover up

— Christian freedom is always conditioned by Christian responsibility (Cf. Gal 5, v13 specifically) and must never be used as a cloke, or cover-up, for evil

— Freedom cannot be used as a pretext to antinomianism, which is disobeying government law

— Spiritual freedom is not a pretext for evil deeds, but it is the freedom that allows one to become a bondservant

3. Because they are servants of God. Christians enjoy true freedom when they obey God and live as servants.

In the OT, after a man served his six years of slavery, he was released in the seventh.

However, if he had learned to love his master, the freed man could choose to become a bondservant and remain a slave to the master for the remainder of his life. Believers have

been freed from the slave market of sin, but it is this freedom that now enables freed men to become bondservants to God for the rest of their lives.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

17 Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

17 Honor everyone. Keep on loving the community of believers, fearing God, and honoring the king.

17 Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

- This section concludes with a four-point summary of Christian citizenship:

- "Honor all people" - *timeisate*, "honor, value, esteem"; cf. *timein*, "respect, honor," in 3:7 everyone (Cf. Rom 12:10; 13:7)

— Believers should be conscious of the fact that each human has been uniquely created in God's image (James 3:9-10)

- "...love the brotherhood" - better translated, "brotherhood, keep on loving" ("brotherhood" is in the emphatic position)

— All men should be honored, but believers should be loved with *agape* love

- "...fear God" - the verb "fear" (*phobeisthe*) here does not mean to be in terror, but in awe and reverence that leads to obedience

— Cf. *phobo* in 1:17; *phobou* in 3:16; *phobon* in 2 Cor 7:11

— One will never truly respect people until he reverences God

- "...honor the king" - *timaoi*, the ruler must be shown all due respect as is befitting to the supreme authority of civil government, understanding that it is God who puts all in positions of authority

(3) Submission to masters (2:18-25)

(A) Servant's responsibility to submit to unfair masters (2:18-20)

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all **respect**, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are harsh.

18 Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

18 You household servants must submit yourselves to your masters out of respect, not only to those who are kind and fair, but also to those who are unjust.

18 Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

- "Servants" - the Greek word for slaves here is not *douloi*, the common term for slaves (Cf. v16), but *oiketai*, which refers to household or domestic servants (Cf. Luke 16:13; Acts 10:7; Rom 14:4)

- "...be subject" - *hypotassō*, a nominative participle that continues the idea of submission expressed in v13 through the aorist imperative
- Peter challenged Christian slaves to submit to and respect even those who are "froward" (harsh); from the Greek *skolios* (lit., "curved," "bent," or "not straight"). The medical term "scoliosis" referring to curvature of the spine, comes from this word.
- "...respect" - does not refer to fear of the master, but rather fear of God (Cf. v17)
- Peter applies truth to all classes of masters/employers: those who are "good and gentle," but also to those who are "froward" (crooked)
- They must submit even to a crooked master because such obedience is an act of grace. This submission is not in the sense of carrying out devious activities but in the sense of complying with a crooked master who demands legitimate actions. Such obedience is the evidence of grace in an individual's life.

19 For this finds favor, **if** for the sake of conscience toward God a person endures grief when suffering unjustly.

19 For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

19 For it is a fine thing if, when moved by your conscience to please God, you suffer patiently when wronged.

19 For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

- Peter states that it is acceptable to suffer wrongfully for the sake of the conscience
- This is a principle that may be applied to any situation where *unjust* suffering occurs
- "...if" - first class condition in Greek, a condition assumed to be true

20 For what **credit** is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer *for it* you patiently endure it, this *finds* favor with God.

20 What good does it do if, when you sin, you patiently receive punishment for it? But if you suffer for doing good and receive it patiently, you have God's approval.

20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

- "...credit" - fame, reputation; refers to the opinion of men as the report of one's conduct spreads

- No credit accrues for enduring punishment for doing wrong—you get what you deserve. If believers suffer patiently after being beaten for sins committed, there is no merit. Endurance for deserved punishment is not commendable.

— It is respectful submission to *undeserved* suffering that finds favor with God, because such behavior demonstrates His grace. If wrongful suffering occurs, believers are to patiently endure, as this is acceptable to God. This knowledge should provide even greater patient endurance.

- Of the hurts that you have, the most dangerous ones are those that are justified...

— If you have unjustified hurts or feelings, it's easier to let those go or dismiss

— Justified hurts bind you to the person who hurt you...that bind is harder to break

(B) Christ's example of submission to injustice (2:21-25)

21 For you have been **called** for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you **anexample**, so that you would follow in His steps,

21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

21 This is, in fact, what you were called to do, because: The Messiah also suffered for you and left an example for you to follow in his steps.

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

- Peter now encourages his readers to exercise patient endurance in the context of wrongful suffering

— He offers as an example the greatest illustration of this type of suffering: the Messiah

- "...called" - believers are "called" to suffer (Matt 10:38; 16:24; Luke 14:27; Acts 14:22)

— Peter's point is that Jesus suffered for them, and He should be their motivation to willingly accept suffering while doing good

— Christians are called (*eklethete*; Cf. 1:15; 2:9) to follow Christ, to emulate His character and conduct, because He suffered for them

— Whatever we're suffering, it's less than what Christ suffered for us

- "...an example" - the word rendered "an example" (*hypogrammon*, lit., "underwriting") appearing only here in the NT, refers to a writing or drawing that a student reproduces

— The Teacher presented the original; the student must now produce a copy of the original. Because Jesus is the original, we should replicate Him.

22 HE WHO COMMITTED NO sin, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT found IN HIS MOUTH;

22 who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;

22 "He never sinned, and he never told a lie."

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

- Peter is quoting from Is 53:9...

— Jesus committed no sin, either before or during His suffering (Cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 John 3:5)

— He was completely innocent in both deed and word: no deceit (*do/los*) was found in His mouth (Cf. 2:1)

23 and while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return; **while suffering, He did not threaten**, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

23 When he was insulted, he did not retaliate. When he suffered, he did not threaten. It was his habit to commit the matter to the one who judges fairly.

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

- Christ was the perfect example of patient submission to unjust suffering (Cf. Rom 12:19-20). He did not rebel against His unjust suffering; neither should these believers.

— Humanly speaking, the provocation to retaliate during Christ's arrest, trial, and crucifixion was extreme

- "...while suffering, He did not threaten" - He suffered physically, but did not threaten retaliation

— He left it to the Father to vindicate Him, in His own good time. We must also.

24 and He Himself **brought our sins in His body** up on the cross, so that **we might die to sin** and live for righteousness; by His **wounds you were healed**.

24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

24 "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the tree, so that we might die to those sins and live righteously. "By his wounds you have been healed."

24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

- Peter now reminds us of the purpose of Jesus' suffering...

- "...brought our sins" - in the Greek the words "our sins" are near the beginning of the verse and thus stand out emphatically, while He Himself stresses Christ's personal involvement

— "brought" - *anapherō*, used in the LXX as "to bring sacrifices" (Gen 8:20; Lev 14:20; 17:5); it's used in James 2:21 in speaking of Abraham's offering of Isaac

- "...in His body" - He Himself, no one else; He alone bore our sins

- "...we might die to sin" - His death makes it possible for believers to be free from both the penalty and the power of sin and to live for Him: so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness (Cf. Rom 6:2,13)
- Christ suffered so it would be possible for Christians to follow His example, both in suffering and in righteous living
- "...wounds" - the reference is to salvation. Christ's stripes (*molops*, lit., "wound"; "stripe left by a lash," refers to Jesus' scourging and death, which accomplished "healing"—the salvation of every individual who trusts Him as his Savior
- "...you were healed" - *iaomai*, Peter made a general reference to salvation: by His wounds you have been healed (Cf. Is 53:5)
- This does not refer to physical healing; the verb's past tense indicates completed action, the "healing" is an accomplished fact, which occurred on the Cross
- What are we healed from? - Sin, death

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, **but now you have returned** to the **Shepherd** and **Guardian** of your souls.

25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

25 You were "like sheep that kept going astray," but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

- Here, Peter addresses the Jewish believers' position based on Is 53:6: once, like sheep, they had "gone astray," but now they have returned to the "Shepherd and Bishop" of their souls

- "...but now you have returned" - this shows that sinners who trust in the Lord for salvation were already His sheep, even before they knew their need for salvation (Cf. John 10:16)

— Note that the phrase is completely passive on the part of the person. The work of regeneration is entirely Divine, and there's nothing man can do to achieve it.

— These belonged to Him from all eternity; they were His by the Father's sovereign election and by His gift of them to the Son

— "returned" - does not refer to a backslidden believer who "returns" to Christ; it speaks of an "elected" person who comes to believe. Their belief "returned" them to Christ.

- "...Shepherd" - means "to lead"; it pictures the Messiah as the Shepherd predicted in Zech 11:4-14, fulfilled in John 10:1-18. Peter will make the same point again in 5:4.

- "...Guardian" - means "to oversee" or "to protect"

— It is commonly used of church leaders (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim 3:2; 1 Peter 5:2-4), this is the only time it is used in reference to Jesus

— Christ not only set the example and provides salvation, but He also gives guidance and protection to those who were headed away (like sheep going astray) from Him, but who then “turned about” (rather than returned) to the Shepherd and Overseer (*episkopon*) of their souls

— “Shepherd” and “Guardian” stress Christ’s matchless guidance and management of those who commit themselves to His care (Ezek 34:11-16)