

# **The ‘Household of God’: Contemporary Misappropriations**

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## **Abstract**

After a few preliminary thoughts on the etymological and historical roots of the concept, ‘Household of God’, this essay proceeds to examine some of its essential elements from a strict biblical point of view. It then proceeds to briefly contrast the mainstream Christian with the Catholic viewpoint of God’s kingdom using Lydia’s conversion in the Old Testament as a general model for the biblical viewpoint. In doing so, the essay briefly separates the views of the Old and New Testaments on God’s kingdom while exploring its use as a metaphor. The distinctly modern version of the ‘Kingdom of God’ is then brought into the analytical picture and briefly contrasted with the biblical viewpoint to denote important differences and similarities. The essay concludes by suggesting that there are many important moral lessons to be learned from the blatant misappropriation of the biblical notion of God’s kingdom by contemporary biblical scholarship. Modern uses appear to be aimed at achieving socio-theological ends such as various political programs for social improvement or replacing economic regimes rather than the sacred, spiritual ends emphasized throughout the testaments..

## **Keywords**

Household of God; Kingdom of God; household; house; biblical; Christian; Catholic; household as metaphor; Old-New Testaments; biblical vs. contemporary views of the household of God; hermeneutical lessons.

## **Preliminary Thoughts**

In order to reach an adequate understanding of the biblical concept of ‘Household of God’, perhaps it would be helpful to contrast it with the contemporary sociological concept of the nuclear family (Collins, 2021). At least three specific terms are found in the Bible relating to the ‘family’ concept: One is the Hebrew word ‘bayith’ and the other two are the Greek words ‘oikia’ and ‘oikos’. In ancient Israel, patriarchy reigned where each family was fully complete, and the oldest living male was the unquestioned head of the house. Evidently, therefore, ‘house’ and ‘household’ were nearly synonymous.

Several examples illustrate this worldview in the Bible. When God appealed to Abraham, it was to ensure “that he might command his children and *household* after him” (Genesis 18:19). Another example refers to the eating of the Passover-lamb by the “*household*” (Exodus 12:3). In Numbers 16:31-33 and Deuteronomy 11:6, the Bible talks about how the “*households*” of the rebels in the camp of Israel were as doomed as the Hebrews themselves.

Another highly pertinent example is how everywhere in the Old Testament, the children are the inheritors of the sins of their fathers, and King David’s “*household*” shares in this humiliation (2 Samuel 15:16). Evidently, then, human life in the Old Testament was not a collection of independent individuals as in contemporary society. Whatever the family was conceived to be, it was the central social unit of communal and national life in ancient Israel (Dosker, 2021).

When the New Testament is added to the analysis, it appears to be more of the same. According to Matthew 10:13, the attitude of the members of a house determined whether and to what extent a curse or a blessing of the apostles would abide on a house. Mark 3:25 warns that “a divided house falls”. Another relevant example refers to how a “*household*” believes the same as the head of the household believes (John 4:53; Acts

16:15,34). It should not be surprising that “households” became the central focus of the church’s early life. Among many other examples that could be provided here, it speaks about the house of Prisca and Aquila in Rome (Rom 16:5), the house of Stephanas (1 Cor 16:15), and the house of Onesiphorus (2 Tim 1:16), among many others.

### **Ancient and Modern Households Contrasted**

Although both the Old and New Testaments focused heavily on the pivotal importance of a traditional family life, modern society continues to suffer from its weakening by several means that tend to find their philosophical lifeblood in rampant individualism. The Second World War seems to be the defining event for the family concept. Prior to that time, it appears that a “family” was composed of all living relatives, people who weren’t legally related such as third cousins, brothers-in-law or close friends, and all ancestors, not just mother and father with procreated children or the nuclear family.

After World War II, a different story. The modern concept of the family becomes very exclusive and limiting, for better or for worse from a social point of view. Certainly, it becomes very bizarre by ancient biblical comparison. Even translations of the Bible start to use the family concept in ways that biblical Hebrew and biblical Greek did not. Suddenly, they start talking about ‘families’ whereas the Bible spoke about ‘households’, perhaps because Bible translators wanted to make the Bible more accessible to modern people. Some people argue it was to make more money by upholding and promoting family values and thus selling more Bibles (Collins, 2021). This is precisely why we need to comprehend thoroughly what the Bible means by using the term “household” in a great variety of contexts, not the least of which is to underscore the spiritual dimension of human life.

We can get a somewhat better sense of the biblical view of household by reading the detailed description of the conversion

of a wealthy woman called Lydia in Acts 16:11-15. If we impose our modern concept of the family upon this reading, we may get a completely wrong picture of what is being talked about. We might think that a wealthy single woman has invited the apostle Paul and his travel companions to lodge in her luxury apartment for nefarious sensual pleasures. We might think how is she going to explain all those visitors to her husband when he returns. We might imagine that husband tripping over people as he's walking around the house and wondering what latest cult his wife has joined! The Acts doesn't specify that Paul took off as soon as the husband arrived, it's obvious the view about "family" as applied in this case needs to be corrected. More about this Lydia example later.

As compared to standard conceptions, the biblical household was actually a combination of a modern family and a modern business. Family members, employees, even slaves all lived in the same house, and in many if not most cases, the house functioned as both a home and a place of business. For sure, slavery was not a high-end status in the first century Roman Empire. But it is true that slaves were considered members of the "household", and they even had legal rights of inheritance under certain conditions (Kostenberger, 2017).

Presumably, this is one of the primary reasons that many indigent members of society at that time requested to be sold into slavery. Even the word 'slave' itself carried connotations wholly different than modern conceptions. The 'master' or head of the 'household' had a series of legal and moral obligations towards 'slave' household members. For example, they had to be provided with adequate room and board, and protected from physical harm. Otherwise, they could not work productively for the head of household to pay off their debt (Cowan, 2011; Collins, 2002; Matthews, 2018).

There are other aspects about ancient 'households' which make modern attributions of meaning problematic if not questionable. A case in point are the archaeological findings dating from the

first century which indicate quite surely that heads of households were neither exclusively nor predominantly male. As well, there are several biblical examples that lend support to these findings, not the least of which is the aforementioned Lydia conversion example. Archaeological findings confirm that the largest building in Herculanaeum, a suburb of Pompeii, was actually a famous businesswomen's club owned by a businesswoman called, you guessed it, "Lydia" of Bible fame.

Through archaeological work, we now know that it was thriving during the same timeframe as the events described in the Acts. We know that Lydia was very wealthy because many upper-class luxury items were eventually uncovered. Of course, it was destroyed and buried by the sudden massive eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79. So, then, it is important to remember that when we read about the Christian conversion of Lydia in Acts 16: 11-15, it is also vital to keep in mind the historical context and the specific biblical conception of 'household'.

By doing so, we get a whole different picture than modern connotations of that concept. In other words, we have to 'read' the Bible in its own terms, not in our own present theoretical terms. If we do this, we come to realize that the apostle Paul succeeded to convert a very wealthy and influential member of the Pompeii business community, along with her entire 'household'. This means that all of her relatives, employees, and slaves were also converted at that time. It means that she independently invited Paul and his retinue to lodge with her in luxury accommodations while he was in the area for missionary purposes. Last but not least, it also means that Lydia was in sole command of that 'household'; in effect, as the Acts points out, it was her household.

Before we dig a little deeper into the uniquely 'biblical' view of 'household', it bears repeating the obvious truth that Bible households were not modern suburban households even if we just look at the physical material dimension of that concept, that is, the dwelling and the people living in it and the multiple

social purposes it served. Since there were no modern technologically sophisticated household appliances like dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, and washing machines, for example, there was ample human labor to do the necessary housework and more. It is precisely in this sense that the ancient household must be considered both a family and a business.

The family, domestic staff, and significant others all lived together in one house and everyone's livelihood, their very survival, depended on this organized living arrangement. That means that the household was rather large and each member of that household was empowered to fulfill the instructions and business of the master or head of household. In turn, this meant that the master or head of household had fixed and unavoidable responsibilities for the survival and well-being of all household members from both a practical and a moral perspective. The enormous significance of this point for a proper, accurate and complete understanding of the genuine Christian meaning of the household concept becomes much clearer in comparative view.

### **The Christian 'Household of God'**

In Christianity, it almost goes without saying that the "household of God" concept does NOT refer to the physical or materialistic aspect of human existence. Although the Bible contains numerous references to that effect, more importantly it also contains several references to the 'family' members of the household of God: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the angels and apostles, 'believers', and so forth. Essentially, they all live together in one sacred or spiritual 'house', so to speak, the house of the Lord, which cuts across all spatial and temporal dimensions. That 'house' is not exclusively physical in nature as it comes to be known in modern times but, rather, spiritual and sacred.

As well, all of them are empowered to carry out the instructions and business of the master or head of household, namely Christ, and that ‘business’ is to redeem every human soul. God’s ‘household’ as it was known then was filled with spiritual ‘souls’, not physical people. Like the ‘master’ of the household of ancient times would send workers out to the fields to reap crops, so, too, were ‘believers’ sent by God to redeem souls, not physical flesh. The biblical point is that Christians are not only loved by God but, as well, sent by God as messengers of His ‘Word’ for the purpose of redeeming souls.

In a word, Christians are citizens of God’s spiritual kingdom, not citizens of geographic countries, cultures, or political entities. God’s household is emphatically not a political household. That they might be afforded the opportunity to come into fellowship or communion with God, believers are the messengers of His providence introduced into the lives of sinners. This is the ‘house of God’ or ‘household of God’ message that comes through the Bible loud and clear when it is interpreted on its own terms. What’s more, it is emphatically not the typical modern evangelistic notion of the ‘Kingdom of God’ brought down from heaven to earth during the predicted ‘End Times’ populated by resurrected physical bodies of believers. Ostensibly, this is why Christ retorted on so many occasions,

This means without doubt that the uniquely biblical meaning of the phrase “Household of God” is a profound reference to a holy or sacred spiritual “house”, not any kind of physical dwelling or geographic territory nor its inhabitants nor any kind of materialistic accomplishments resulting from human activities. What is being accomplished by Christian human activity is spiritual in nature, not worldly but, rather, other-worldly.

Both the “house” and the “household” concepts contained within the Bible are employed as metaphors to hold constant and compare for analytical and communicative purposes two

different dimensions of human existence, one infinitely more important than the other but not without devaluing or discounting that other dimension – the physical world and the spiritual world. They exist simultaneously and interdependently from the biblical point of view. Modern cultural rejection and relativization of this biblical claim does not alter the authenticity nor legitimacy of that claim (Clowney, 2002; Lints, 1993). Reducing the Bible into total or in part to a cultural product, that is, culturalizing the Bible and/or its messages does not alter biblical truth either even if partially true. Self-aggrandizing materialistic rejection of the existence of a ‘spiritual world’ centrally significant to Christian doctrine does not in the slightest falsify that doctrine.

### **The Catholic ‘Household of God’**

The biblical view of the household of God is very much a part of Catholic Christianity regardless of the problems and difficulties which have been advertised and popularized, some might even say demonized, by contemporary mainstream and social media. In Catholicism, the household of God consists of the immediate family members, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But the family extends to prophets, angels, and apostles as well as the rest of us wayward sinners who are to Jesus the sheep in the field who have wandered away from certain safety and full fellowship with God due to Adam’s disobedience. Consequently, we are now mired in a quandary and stuck in the quicksand of Adam’s original sin.

What exactly is our quandary, our predicament? Certainly, a central aspect of this predicament is that we were originally spiritual creatures, but now we are flesh and spirit. Furthermore, we are physical and spiritual creatures who have over time come to reject our spiritual roots. Indeed, we have come to reject the whole notion of a spiritual world in another dimension of existence. That means that humanity faces the finality of death in tremendous distress, worry, anxiety, and at least some degree of uncertainty.



Human beings are only God's creatures, made in His image, yes, but finite and facing death, hence the distress. But Jesus Christ is infinite, not finite, God incarnate as human being. Human beings have to believe that God became incarnate as Jesus Christ to help humanity solve this quandary or predicament causing so much stress for us, to help us conquer death by example. We have to believe that through his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ as God incarnate chose to show humanity infinite grace, mercy, and love.

By dying on the cross, God incarnate as Jesus Christ wanted to undo the great harm committed by our ancestor, Adam. Fortunately, dying on the cross did much more than just restore humanity to its original state. The death of Jesus Christ on the cross transformed humanity from lost sheep forever wandering in the field to sons and daughters adopted by God. In a very real sense, we have become the hired hands of ancient times obligated to fulfill the instructions and business of Jesus Christ, the master or head of the spiritual household, the 'household of God'. Like ancient times, the sons and daughters of the Father are entitled to share in the spiritual wealth of the Christian family.

More importantly, like ancient times, as sons and daughters of the Father we are empowered with the authority and responsibility to follow God's instructions and to conduct God's spiritual business in this world without fear nor doubt. What's more, the Father has offered us an extra bonus for doing His business quite beyond being saved from death. On the last day of the age, on the final judgment day, the Father has promised His sons and daughters rewards based on a thorough performance review of how effective they have been in conducting the spiritual business of His Kingdom.

### **The Biblical View**

In a nutshell, the above last few paragraphs represent not only a genuine first-century biblical interpretation of the concept

“Household of God’ in the Bible’s own terms, but also the Catholic Christian doctrine. As such, it represents the “community of believers” infused, energized, and directed by the Holy Spirit within a triune relationship with God (Hardon, 1981, p. 23). In effect, the household of God consists of much more than just a collection or assembly of believers gathering together in a physical structure called a “Church” to engage in worshipping activities.

To be sure, it is a gathering of people who share a common faith, yes, but this faith is not restricted by the physical structures of a building. Even the Greek term ‘ekklesia’ makes this clear. As the Bible points out, it is a ‘building’ made up of “living stones”, stones of flesh and blood, the cornerstone of which is Christ Himself. This assembly of people who share a common faith or belief in the revelation of Jesus Christ are called the “living stones” of the Church of Christ.

In Catholicism, this Church is viewed as the mystical body of Christ, which comes from Paul in 1 Cor 12:12-13, “Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body”. The *unity of the members* is accomplished through *baptism* into the Body of Christ and best expressed under the head of the Christian *spiritual household*, the master, if you will, Jesus Christ (Brighenti, 2015, pp. 18-20).

So it is, then, that we have arrived at an approximate biblical interpretation of our central concept under examination, namely, ‘the household of God’. It seems to be characterized by several central features. *First*, the concept itself contains a plethora of meanings and connotations when employed in a variety of different contexts to explain or illuminate understanding about a variety of events and activities at different times and in different places by different people. In other words, it appears not to be restricted exclusively to one meaning, nor has its meaning been exhausted definitely.

The terms 'house' and 'household' by themselves describe a broad variety of biblical relationships, similar or related concepts, meanings, and contexts, at the very least, in both the Old and the New Testaments (See Appendix II). For example, household has been used at times synonymous with house because the Hebrew root word for household in the Old Testament is "byt", meaning literally, "house". Genesis 7:1 is an example of the use of the term 'house' to refer simply to kinfolk or family members. Household may also refer to a *family's descendants* as an organized body, as in Genesis 18:19, or Deuteronomy 25:9, or 1 Kings 11:38. On the other hand, the *Hebrew people as a nation* or any of its tribes or clans may also be denoted by the household concept (Exodus 19:3; Exodus 40:38; Isaiah 8:17; Amos 3:13/7:16). It may also be the case that *paternal ancestry* is involved when household is mentioned, as in Exodus 6:14/12:3, or Numbers 1:2, or Joshua 22:14. As well, of course, the term can be employed to denote strictly *singular household affairs*: belongings, property, people, etc., in one family dwelling (1 Kings 4:6; 2 Kings 15:5; Genesis 39:4; Isaiah 22:15/36:3).

By no means do these various connotations exhaust the variety of simple meanings applied in numerous differential contexts within the Bible. There are almost countless other biblical uses of the concept denoting a variety of inner-worldly affairs as well as actual physical structures or dwellings. Also, here we must keep in mind that these connotations tend not to refer to the many ways in which the household concept and similar related concepts are employed to refer to other-worldly affairs in a spiritual world or dimension.

Second, and arguably more importantly, as just mentioned we have found that the household concept is also employed in the Bible to refer to something more than what exists in the material physical world, something beyond human existence, a metaphysical world or another dimension called a holy or sacred 'spiritual world'. Presumably, that's why the apostle Paul in his Pastoral Epistles uses the household metaphor to refer to

the “church as God’s household” (1 Timothy 3:15; Eph 2:19-21; 1 Peter 2:5).

Paul was perhaps trying to warn people that they have to know how to conduct themselves in “God’s household”. It was clear with Paul that there is an integral relationship between the natural household as human biological social unit AND the church as God’s spiritual household. In other words, what occurs in the material physical world is NOT only restricted to that material physical world but is simultaneously human activity as the church in God’s spiritual household. The strong and undeniable implication here is that human life and activity is at once both physical and spiritual.

Third, as hinted at above, the household of God concept is intimately and integrally connected to other concepts as components of the Christian faith in an organized interconnected and interfused system of beliefs. This means that such biblical concepts like ‘church’, ‘mission’, ‘baptism’, ‘family’, ‘sin’, ‘demon’, ‘revelation’, ‘judgment’, ‘house of God’, ‘Kingdom of God’, ‘kingdom of heaven’, ‘Gospel of the kingdom’, ‘fellowship’, ‘spirit’, ‘Holy Spirit’, ‘Father’, ‘Son’, ‘God’, ‘Jesus Christ’, and so much more, cannot and should not be interpreted and understood independently in isolation from each other nor used in the human creation of another belief system. As well, it also means that these concepts cannot be selected out of their conceptual home from within the Biblical Christian belief system and their meanings exploited as symbolic capital for other contextual purposes nor to feed intentions other than those outlined in the Bible system itself.

Lastly, and by far perhaps the most essential lesson to be learned from our review and examination of the ‘household of God’ concept in the Bible: it is not wholly a concept or idea, but partially a symbol. That means that there is no perfect one-to-one correlation between the concept ‘Household of God’ and something physically or materialistically identifiable to which it refers. Its unique function, as suggested above, is to connect to

and with favor bring to mind an entire system of ideas, beliefs, and feelings, all of it sacredly and permanently cemented to or founded upon the revelation of God in the salvation of humanity through Jesus Christ. In other words, it operates or functions to call to mind, to illicit, or to evoke an entire conceptual framework or corpus of beliefs and principles within which it is subsequently placed and outside of which it cannot be adequately understood.

That's why the meaning of the 'household of God' as a uniquely biblical idea can never be fully exhausted nor expressed in human language by any particular singular referent (Perrin, 1980, 2012; Wheelwright, 1978; Chilton, 1987). That is also why that concept nor any other biblical idea or expression or part such as 'exodus', 'liberation', 'salvation', and so forth cannot be carved out of the Bible, reformed or reformulated and then applied in another context as part of a foreign anthropomorphic theoretical model, a human-created theoretical construct having only human attributes or features infused by mainly materialistic goals or aims.

### **Some Important Lessons**

This point underscores the important hermeneutical moral to be learned from wrongly appropriating concepts, expressions, beliefs, statements, or other parts of the Bible, and then twisting them to mean something completely or even slightly different while simultaneously claiming a false genuine allegiance to authentic biblical meaning. Before we begin to explore the pertinence of biblical language to our own earthly human concerns, whatever those might be, whether intended or unintentional, what is needed is to fully comprehend biblical language on its own terms and within the 'context' of its own belief-system. We need to maintain this belief-system context firmly in mind as an interpretative control mechanism when we apply biblical language to contemporary concerns. It operates very much like a hermeneutic default system built into the Christian faith.

By contrast, misappropriation of biblical language leads to theoretically disastrous results. Interpreters of the Bible are not allowed to use any part of biblical language to mean anything they want it to mean for whatever purposes they might justify. At least, if it is done this way, it should be stated clearly and openly as such. But what must not be done is to consciously or unconsciously project into the biblical text contemporary meanings and definitions, and then expect the Bible to answer to these wrongly attributed meanings. If committed, this would be a serious offense against Christianity through misuse or wrongful interpretation of biblical language which, in turn, chisels away at “the heart of Jesus’ mission” (Carson, 2002, p. 42). This kind of interpretative gymnastics detracts from the intended meaning and purpose of the biblical language which is intended not only to guide but also direct analytical attention and interpretation to one true God.

Therefore, the effects of all biblical expressions such as ‘household of God’, ‘liberation’, mission, church, and so forth cannot be construed as or constructed as a part of something separated or independent from God. As Chilton (1978) and several other biblical theologians have warned ominously, treating any biblical expressions as part of an “apocalyptic regime, as a political movement, as a program for social improvement, i.e., as anything other than the revelation of God (runs) the risk of putting ideology in the place of faith (ibid., p. 44).

All this having been said, it stands to reason that there is no such thing as an American Christianity or Canadian Christianity or Japanese Christianity or ‘Western’ Christian or ‘Eastern’ Christianity, or East Asian Christianity, ad infinitum ad nauseam. In ‘Western’ Christianity, the interpretation of the concept ‘Household of God’ which comes closest to an authentic biblical view in the Bible’s own terms is perhaps scholarly work done by some of the conventional biblical theologians (Cowan, 2021; Carson, 2002; Dosker, 2021; Lee, 2016; Kostenberger, 2017; Matthews, 2018; Orr, 2014).

Unfortunately, however, it is almost completely devoid of any relevant contributions to authentic biblical interpretation on its own terms since it is steadfastly transformed to serve cultural purposes. Like for many other academic scholars in theology, religious studies, the philosophy of religion, in East Asia and elsewhere, the language and expressions of the Christian Bible have been appropriated by culture to serve materialist aims largely infused by a strong Marxist political-economic perspective as socialist political movement or masked as various centralized government programs for social improvement or human betterment or ‘sustainable development’ or ‘ecojustice’ or ...

It seems as if the possibility for employing ‘the Household of God’ concept in the Bible as an authentic biblical hermeneutic, where creation itself (Ibid., p. 35) is fully and whole-heartedly included in a faithful biblical interpretation of God’s revelation through the salvific message of Jesus Christ, not only humanity, is rather remote indeed. The risks mentioned earlier about intentionally or unconsciously substituting ideology for faith to make it serve political or social ends not explicitly specified in the Bible itself loom rather large.

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## **Appendix I**

Gen 26:12-14. Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the year a hundred fold. And the Lord blessed him, and the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.

Gen 31:17-19. Then Jacob arose and put his children and wives upon camels; and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddanaram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's.

Exodus 1:1. Now these are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; they came each one with his household.

Proverbs 31:10-27. An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels...She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness....

Matthew 13:49-52. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes". And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old".

Ephesians 2:17-22 "And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and

prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit”.

1 Tim 3:1-5. “It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.....He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity. But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”

1 Tim 3:14-15. “I am writing these things to you hoping to come to you before long; but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth”.

1 Peter 4:16-19. “but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name. For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And if it is with difficulty that the righteous be saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner? Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right”.

1 Peter 2:5. “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, 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...”