

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER
1 Pet. 1:3-5

Intro: Those who believe, as we do, that the Bible is the Word of God believe that the men who were used to write the books of the Bible did so under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

However, this does not mean that they became secretaries taking dictation, nor mechanical men doing only what others indicated that they should do.

In every book of the Bible the human element is very prominent.

In Peter's case we have a unique opportunity to see how he came to an understanding of the Gospel.

It was quite different with Paul. He was separated from the other Apostles immediately after he was saved, and the Gospel was given to him by special revelation. We even find him taking a stand against Peter in the epistle to the Galatians because "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel" (Gal. 2:14a).

But with Peter it was different.

He was brought to the Lord through his brother, Andrew, who told him, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41).

According to Matt. 16:16, Peter also was convinced that the Lord was the Messiah, the Christ, when he gave his well-known confession: "Thou art the Christ . . ."

But, immediately afterwards he manifested that the Gospel was not altogether clear to him when he contradicted the Lord who had started to tell the disciples about His death and resurrection (Matt. 16:21).

Even in his message on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 there is a major emphasis upon what the coming of Christ would mean to Israel, especially in connection with the establishing of the Messianic Kingdom.

But by the time (in Acts 10) that he went down to Caesarea to preach to the Gentiles we see how much the Gospel had reached his own heart. Listen to these words: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

There are other details which might be filled in, but this is enough to see how Peter progressed in his understanding of the

Gospel. BY THE TIME HE WROTE HIS EPISTLES, HIS UNDERSTANDING WAS AS CLEAR AS A CRYSTAL.

If we were to ask Peter, "Peter, what are the vital elements in the Gospel?" what would his answer be. Our Scripture reading tonight leaves no doubt as to what he would say.

I. SALVATION IS A WORK OF GOD--from start to finish.

Note his words of praise in v. 3a, and then read v. 5. Peter's message did not have to do with what man needed to do for God, but with what God had already done, and would continue to do for man.

II. SALVATION HAS TO DO WITH JESUS CHRIST--Who He was and what He did.

Peter had no doubt about the Deity of Jesus Christ. That is evident in his confession, and even obvious in his original rejection of what Christ said about His own death and resurrection. How could men possibly succeed in putting the Lord to death?

Even when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he is declaring His Deity. Cf. John 5:18.

So that Peter would have us know that before you and I can understand the importance of what He did, we must come to know who He was and is: "the Son of the living God."

Two of the disciples who were the closest to the Lord, and who had the opportunity of knowing Him the most intimately, have written to tell us that they knew that He was God in human flesh.

Furthermore, Peter had no doubt about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:3b.

But, in order for him to be raised, He had to die!

He speaks of His sufferings in v. 11. Also in 2:24; 3:18. And this great mystery which had baffled Peter now was clear to Him.

Peter would have had no patience with the worship of a crucified Savior unless there were also an equal emphasis on His resurrection!

III. SALVATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH SALVATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Do you remember that we read earlier in Acts 10:43, "To him give all the prophets witness"?

Peter had evidently been raised more on the traditions of the elders, but we will have to say that he was looking for the Messiah. BUT AS HE LEARNED MORE AND MORE ABOUT THE LORD HE TOOK WHAT HE WAS LEARNING AND FOUND THAT IT HARMONIZED COMPLETELY WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

Thus, you do not have one way of salvation in the OT, and another in the NT. Both are the same!

IV. SALVATION CAN NEVER BE LOST, BUT WHETHER WILL IT BE COMPLETED UNTIL SOME FUTURE TIME.

This truth came to mean more and more to Peter.

Note: "God . . . hath begotten us again unto a living hope . . . to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."

What is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (v. 5)?

What is going to be "found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (v. 7)?

What is "the end of our faith" (v. 9)?

What is it that "the prophets have inquired and searched diligently into" (v. 10), and that "angels desire to look into" (v. 12)?

Peter does not go into all of the details here, but he does let us know what the whole goal and object of our salvation is. It means:

- A. "Heaven"—not a future glory here on earth (although that will come too). Cf. v. 4, "reserved in heaven for you"—so you have to go to heaven to get it.
- B. Seeing the Lord. Read v. 8, "Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing"—believing what? BELIEVING THAT WE SHALL SEE HIM. We do what? "Ye rejoice with . . ."
- C. This will all result in "glory" (vv. 7b, 8b; 5:1, 4). What does "glory" mean? It means that we will be like Him. Cf. 1 John 3:2.

Concl: Now we have THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PETER. It is prophesied in the OT. It was made possible by the coming

of the Lord Jesus Christ--His death and His resurrection. It becomes ours by FAITH ALONE. We are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

— So Peter takes a long look back, and as far ahead as we can anticipate--an endless eternity, and he sees nothing ahead but indescribable joy and glory!

And just to think that all of this is ours, absolutely guaranteed, from the moment we receive Christ as Savior.

Without Him we have nothing!

With Him we are the heirs of a heavenly inheritance that we can never lose!

Do you know Him?

If you do, have you praised Him recently as Peter praises Him here in vv. 3-5?

If you do not know Him, how can you delay your acceptance any longer? All that you and I have without Him means nothing. He alone can "bring us to God" (3:18), He alone can save!