

1 PETER

Introduction: Anyone who has read Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is very familiar with the name, Peter. He is mentioned over 150 times in the NT, most of these in the four Gospels. Originally his name was Simon. We are told in John 1:40-42 that it was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who "brought him [Peter] to Jesus." We are also told in that same chapter that on that occasion when Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, that Jesus said to him, "Thou art Simon the son of Jonas, thou shalt be called Cephas" (John 1:42). And the Apostle John in writing tells us that Cephas means *a stone*. But it seems that the Greek version of the Aramaic Cephas, which was Peter, became the name by which the writer of this epistle was known.

In John 1:44 we are told that Peter and Andrew were from Bethsaida, and they were by trade fishermen, working with their father. They were the first two disciples of the Lord who were called to follow the Lord, and who ultimately became apostles.

From the very first Peter was the leader of the apostles. He was very strong in his character, and very self-assured. And this got him into a lot of trouble, the worst of which was his denial of the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of our Lord's arrest, a thing that he had openly declared that he would never do. But it seems that that was a breaking point in the life of the Apostle Peter. After he heard the rooster crow, and he remembered what the Lord had told him about his denial, we are told that Peter went out and "wept bitterly" (Matt. 26:75; Luke 22:62; see also Mark 14:72). It appears that after the resurrection of the Lord, Peter was a completely different man, and he became a mighty instrument in the early church. He was very active in the early church, but he is not mentioned in the book of Acts after chapter 15 in connection with the Council which was held to determine what would be required of the Gentiles who were being saved. Although Peter was called to be the apostle to the circumcision, he was the one whom the Lord used to open the door to the Gentiles when he was called to the house of Cornelius, a Roman centurion and, thus, a Gentile, where he preached the Gospel unto them, and saw a similar work of the Holy Spirit that had taken place under Peter's ministry on the Day of Pentecost which is recorded in Acts 2.

The Apostle Paul mentioned Peter in his epistle to the Galatian churches, stating first that three years after he had been saved, he went to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter (see Gal. 1:18). Paul also told about a dispute that he had with Peter (Gal. 2:7, 8, 11, 14). Paul also referred to Peter as Cephas in 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:22 and in Galatians 2:9. But with the exception of his name appearing at the beginning of the two epistles which bear his name, he is not mentioned again in the NT. Note that in 2 Peter he identified himself as Simon Peter – Simon, his original name; Peter, the name Christ gave him. So we don't know anything else about Peter, except from his epistles from the late 40's (at the Council in Jerusalem) until possibly the mid 60's when his epistles were written. Where he ministered, and the blessing that he experienced in his ministry, we know nothing. At the end of his first epistle he sent greetings to the Jews of the Dispersion from the church in Babylon where he evidently wrote his first epistle, but that is the only evidence we have that he was there.

While he identified himself in the first verse of 1 Peter as "an apostle of Jesus Christ," he also mentioned in the first verse of chapter 5 that he was "an elder." And he was exhorting the elders who were among "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bothnia" as to what they needed to do to help those in those five areas who were suffering persecution for their faith in Christ. And this is in keeping with the nature of this epistle. This is a pastoral letter. Peter was writing generally to the same believers that James had written to, although at a period several years later than James wrote. Both men wrote to encourage and to instruct those beleaguered people of God as to how they should behave when under assault from those who were enemies of the Gospel.

(February 21, 2006)

1 Peter – An Outline

- I. Introduction (1 Peter 1:1-12).
 - A. The Writer and the Recipients (1:1-2).
 - B. Praise to God for Salvation – the doctrinal section – although Peter made several references to doctrine through the epistle (1:3-12).
 1. The Nature of Salvation (1:3-5).
 2. Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).
 3. Salvation and the Old Testament Prophets (1:10-12).

- II. The Exhortations (1 Peter 1:13-5:11).
 - A. Section One (1 Peter 1:13-3:12).
 1. Concerning the needs of individual believers (1:13-2:10).
 - a. To have hope and to be holy (1:13-25).
 - b. To grow spiritually (2:1-10).
 2. Concerning sin and the people of the world (2:11-17). Note that Peter makes a distinction between sin and the people in this sinful world.
 3. Concerning special groups among believers (2:18-3:12).
 - a. Servants (2:18-25).
 - b. Wives (3:1-6).
 - c. Husbands (3:7).
 - d. All believers – love within; restraint without (3:8-12). Note that Peter supported his exhortations by Scripture: verses 10-12 are a quotation from Psalm 34:12-16a.

 - B. Section Two (1 Peter 3:13-5:11).
 1. Some of the benefits of suffering as Christians (3:13-4:19).
 - a. It gives opportunities to witness to the world (3:13-17).
 - b. This is confirmed and illustrated by the benefits of Christ’s suffering (3:18-22).
 - c. It produces greater godliness in our lives (4:1-19).
 - 1) To do God’s will (4:1-6).
 - 2) To prepare for His coming (4:7).
 - 3) To pray (4:7).
 - 4) To love each other (4:8-10).
 - 5) To minister the Word, depending upon God, for His glory (4:11).
 - 6) Not to think it strange that we suffer, but to rejoice that we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings (4:12-14).
 - 7) To keep us from sin (4:15).
 - 8) To trust God to take care of us (4:16-19).
 2. More Special Instructions (5:1-11).
 - a. For elders (5:1-4).
 - b. For the young (5:5a).
 - c. For all of the Lord’s people (5:5b-11).

- III. Conclusion (1 Peter 5:12-14). In verse 13 Paul states how he would describe this epistle: “I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.”

The Purpose of the Epistle

The Epistle itself shows that Peter was seeking to encourage and comfort those who were suffering severely for their faith in Christ. But throughout the epistle he also exhorted them to persevere in their faith, living for the Lord when they were under trials just like they would at any other time.

The Exposition

I. The Introduction (1 Pet. 1:1-12). A. The Writer and the Recipients (1:1-2).

As was customary in those days, the name of the writer as well as those to whom he, or she, was writing, came at the beginning of the letter. Thus, this is very much like what Paul did, only briefer.

1:1 Peter,” Πέτρος, the Greek form of the Aramaic, Cephas. It means *a rock, or a stone*. We don’t know why the Lord named him Peter unless it was an indication of the place of leadership that Peter was to have with the apostles, and the spiritual strength that would be displayed in his life as a result of God’s work in him. Peter demonstrated early in his apostleship that he was not worthy of the position, but as we follow his story in the NT we see what a tower of strength he became under the blessing of the Lord. The Lord delights in taking the weak and making them strong.

“An apostle of Jesus Christ” – This was his title. He was a personal representative of Jesus Christ. And apostle is one who is sent forth from one to others. This spoke of Peter’s authority to speak on behalf of Jesus Christ. And this he would do in this epistle under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The sovereign authority of Jesus Christ over the people of God, was Peter’s commission as an apostle. It was like receiving a letter from our Lord Himself.

The word “elect” which appears in the KJV in verse 2, immediately follows our Lord’s Name in verse 1 in the Greek text. And so it should read “to elect strangers.” We could translate it “elect foreigners.” It is the same word which is translated “pilgrims” in 2:11. We may be citizens of the United States, but when we were saved we became citizens of heaven, as the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:20-21. We still maintain our earthly citizenship, which last only until we die, but over and above our citizenship in this world is our citizenship in heaven. And this is basic to the problem that we have as Christians. We see it especially in the life of the Apostle Paul. He was the darling of the scribes and Pharisees as long as he was unregenerate, but when he was saved, those who before had been his supporters, became his enemies, and wanted to kill him. We are still to obey the laws of the land in which we were born physically, but after we are saved and become citizens of heaven, we live by higher standards and become like strangers to the people of this world. And we are strangers! But we are “elect strangers,” chosen by God to be His, chosen for salvation and the forgiveness of sins. And even in Peter’s day you would find them “scattered” throughout the Roman Empire. But Peter was writing especially to those in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. One thing that the enemies of the Gospel did not count on when they drove believers from their homes within Israel, was that wherever they went, they would carry on telling others of Christ. And so churches began to spring up throughout the Empire. Out of apparent defeat came great victories. Peter was one of them. He was one of their leaders, and he was not afraid to identify himself with them. They were a very special people. “Elect,” or “chosen,” indicates that they were chosen by God, chosen for salvation, chosen for eternal life, chosen to belong to the Lord, to live for the Lord, and chosen to become like the Lord.

1:2 It is to be understood that in this verse Peter was going on to speak of the chosen people of God. He

was concerned with Jewish believers, but not exclusively so. In the churches Jews and Gentiles were mixed together. There was, and always has been, and always will be, only one Savior: Jesus Christ. And the great doctrines of salvation apply equally to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Here in this verse Peter mentioned all three Persons of the Godhead with reference to salvation.

He was probably speaking here of their election, and saying that it was “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” This word, “foreknowledge,” is used only one other time in the NT, and that is in Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost, in Acts 2:23 where Peter said of Christ,

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Some people, who don’t really believe in the sovereignty of God in salvation, define God’s foreknowledge of what we would do, and so, on that basis, He chose us. That would mean that we are the ones who determine our own salvation. But the Bible says that “there is none that seeketh after God” (Rom. 3:11). If God made His decisions on the basis of what we would do, no one would be saved. “Foreknowledge” speaks of God’s knowledge of what *He* would do! It is His place. He has done the electing. It amounts to His decree. We were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). That is, before creation. God is the One Who took the initiative in salvation. It wasn’t any of us. God’s heart was filled with love for those whom He chose. He chose us; we didn’t originally choose Him. He sent His Son to die for us. And He sent the Holy Spirit to convict us, to draw us, and to redeem us. The more you study salvation, the more you see the evidence of the work of God in all of it, from start to finish. God’s choice of us is past. As we move on to the next statement in this verse, we come to the present. What is it?

“Through sanctification of the Spirit” – This is what is going on in the present. The basis idea in sanctification is that of being set aside, or set apart. This speaks of our growth in the Lord, which Peter speaks about in chapter two. But even here in chapter 1, quoting from the OT, read what Peter said in 1:14-16. *The Spirit’s work is to separate us from sin, and to separate us unto God.* We live in a way that is less and less like the people of the world, and, on the other hand, more and more like Jesus Christ. It is amazing to think of what God has undertaken to do in our lives. And so it is unto obedience. It is through obedience, which is only possible by the Holy Spirit, that we are being sanctified.

Finally, the third of the three statements here is, *not the shedding* of the blood of Jesus, *but the sprinkling!* Christ shed His blood but once. But the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is continually being used to cleanse us from our sins. In 1 John 1:6 and 7 we find these words from another apostle, the Apostle John:

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:6-7).

Wayne Grudem, in his commentary on 1 Peter says that the cleansing of the leper best corresponds to what Peter was speaking of the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. And I fully agree. Cf. Lev 14:1-7

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:
3 And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;
4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:
5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water:
6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall

dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:

7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

So we have had a past – God’s choice of us for salvation. The present – our present and progressive sanctification. And now we come to the future. We will always sin, unfortunately. And we will always need cleansing. And it is only by the blood of Christ which was shed for our salvation, by that same blood that we are being cleansed from the defilement of sin. And this will continue to be true until finally we safe in heaven,

This very brief, but very rich, introduction concludes with that greeting which is a prayer, and is found in all of the Apostle ‘s letters: “Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

For “grace,” look with me at the following verses in 1 Peter: 1:10, 13; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12. What is grace? Grace is the unmerited, undeserved goodness of God. God’s grace was displayed when He chose us. He grace is continually seen as He sanctifies us. And God’s grace is seen day by day, as the blood of Jesus Christ continues to cleanse us from our sins. “Grace” means strength. Cf. 2 Cor 12:7-9

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

Think of it! God has extended His favor to us in Christ. It is by grace that we are saved, and it is by grace that He keeps us. And it will be totally because of God’s grace that we will ultimately stand before God transformed into the very likeness of Christ. Thayer says that the primary meaning of grace is that which “affords joy, pleasure, delight” (p. 665). This is what people want, but apart from God’s grace they never look for it in Christ.

What about “peace”? It is only found three times in 1 Peter, but it is implied throughout this epistle. The three places are 1:2; 3:11; 5:14. What is peace? It is harmony, security, tranquility.

Peter prayed that grace and peace would be *multiplied* unto the believers to whom he was writing. This means that it was Peter’s desire that they would experience an increasing amount of grace and peace throughout the days of their lives.

Remember that “grace” was basically a Gentile greeting, or prayer; “peace” was (and is) a Jewish greeting and prayer. It has also be said that grace is basically NT; peace is OT. The order is significant also. Grace precedes peace. There can be no real, lasting peace apart from grace. And it also must be said that true grace is always accompanied by peace. This applies to salvation. It also applies to the Christian life.

It is difficult to find a more important word for the child of God than “grace.” We are saved by grace. And as Christians we are to be continually growing in grace. Just yesterday I was reading in 1 Corinthians 15, and I came across those familiar words in which the Apostle Paul was giving his own testimony. You will find it in 1 Corinthians 15:9-10:

9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

God works in us by His grace. Grace is strength and power. Paul said this in 2 Corinthians 12:9 where Paul was writing about his “thorn in the flesh.” Three times Paul asked the Lord to remove is, but the answer that

the Lord gave him was:

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

So we can hardly pray a prayer for each other, or for ourselves, than “grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” You can pray that for me, and I will pray the same for you.

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We now come to the second part of the Introduction:

B. Praise to God for Salvation – the doctrinal section (1 Pet. 1:3-12).

I do not mean by this that there is no doctrine in the remainder of the epistle because there is. But, in contrast with the Apostle Paul, in Peter’s first epistle we have a letter which is primarily hortatory, that is, given to exhortation, as 1:13 begins to show. In Alford’s commentary, *the Greek Testament*, he says that in verses 3-9 Peter was directing his readers to look into the future, and then in verses 10-12, to the past. However, in verse 3 he began with the not-too-distant past, when they were saved, before moving into the future, while verse 6 definitely speaks of the present time of his readers. Verses 10-12 have to do with the distant past, the ministry of the OT prophets, who spoke of this same salvation. However, in doing this, I have point out in my outline that verses 3-12 contain three points:

1. **The nature of salvation (1:3-5).**
2. **Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).**
3. **Salvation and the Old Testament prophets (1:10-12).**

So now we are ready to look at what Peter had to say about:

1. The nature of salvation (1:3-5).

1:3 Quoting Alford again, he said that the word that Peter used here for “blessed” (Εὐλογητὸς) “is used in the NT of God only” (IV, 332), like Paul did in 2 Cor. 1:3 and Eph. 1:3. Salvation is all of God, and so He alone is the One Who deserves the praise.

But Dr. Grudem pointed out that Peter praised God, as Paul did, with a Name that God did not have in the OT: “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” But God is not “the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ” in the same sense that He is our God and Father. We are born of God. The Lord Jesus is eternal. He never had a beginning, as John 1:1-2 clearly state. But Dr. Grudem pointed out that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ because He relates to the Lord Jesus as a father relates to his son. We see this especially in the ministry of our Lord upon the earth. Our Lord prayed to God as His Son, depending upon Him, doing His will, seeking His glory.

Here at the beginning of verse 3 Peter was directing praise toward God as the Author of our salvation.

But it is important for us to notice what Peter was doing here. He was directing the attention of his suffering brethren to the benefit it is for believers to praise God when we are under trial. Regardless of what our circumstances might be, we always can and should praise God for saving us. And this should be among the first things that we do. God did a work in us when He saved us which no enemy, nor any trial, can ever take away

from us. And so while this is really a doxology which Peter was expressing for himself, it carries with it an imperative emphasis, that this is what those believers to whom he was writing should do.

And so Peter not only was exhorting them to do as he was doing, but as I have already mentioned he told them why they should be praising the Lord. One of the psalmists wrote in Psalm 113:2 and 3,

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

What God has done for us in Christ was not something that we deserved. It was according to God's mercy, and not just His mercy, but "according to His abundant mercy." It was not just enough mercy to get us saved, but it was far more than we needed. If it had been necessary, the mercy of God was sufficient for the salvation of any sinner over and over again. But we can thank God that salvation is a one-time gift from God which we can never lose. Now as I have mentioned many times, grace has to do with our guilt; mercy has to do with our misery. Sin brings with it all kinds of misery. Look at our country and our world today. People are freer to do whatever they want to do, but there are more miserable people than you and I could possibly count. Sin always brings misery. Sin may give a temporary pleasure, but it always brings with it that "morning after" feeling that people talk about. On the other hand, God's mercy in salvation is "abundant," overflowing, more than enough to give us peace, and joy, and all of the other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. How tragic it is that there are so many people who do not know this. And often, even when men are told about it, they don't care; they aren't interested.

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But what blessing did Peter mention here? As I have already indicated, it was the blessing of salvation. And what a blessing this is! There is absolutely nothing which can even begin to compare with this. And, like God's abundant mercy, this salvation is abundant also. We will understand its abundance more clearly when we see what Peter has said about it.

In God's mercy we have been *born again!* The verb that Peter used is ἀναγεννάω. When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus in John 3, He spoke of being born *from above*. Peter has it here that we are born again, thus drawing a comparison between our first birth and this second birth. As in our first birth we were begotten by our parents, in the new birth we are begotten of God. As we had nothing to do with our first birth, so we have nothing to do with our second birth. Our first birth gave us physical life; our second birth gives us spiritual life. So Peter made it clear that he was writing to believers.

Now this is the aspect of salvation that is *past*, complete and secure. Then Peter moved on to the *future*.

"Unto a lively," or *living*, "hope." As we use the word hope it is often to express what we desire, but which is by no means certain. We have no control over the future. But in this passage, and in many others in the NT, it speaks of something which is yet future, but which is guaranteed by the promise of God. Paul wrote to Titus telling him that we need to be "looking for that blessed hope, and (or, even) the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:13). And the Apostle John wrote that "when He," i.e., Christ, "shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." And then he added, "And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:2b-3). The Apostle Paul, after telling the Roman believers that we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," went on to say,

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Rom. 8:24-25).

Mr. D. Edmond Hiebert writes in his commentary on 1 Peter,

In the present turbulent world, Christians are truly justified in viewing the future with optimism. Our new God-given life has delivered us from hopelessness (Eph. 2:12) and given us a joyous expectancy of what God still has in store for His people (p. 59).

And then Hiebert added on the next page:

The resurrection of Christ is the crowning point of the redemptive work and the valid foundation for all of God's saving work, both present and future (p. 60).

Dr. Clowney of Westminster Seminary said this about our hope:

Our hope is anchored in the past: Jesus arose! Our hope remains in the present: Jesus lives! Our hope is completed in the future: Jesus is coming again (1:5,7, 13) (quoted by Hiebert, p. 60).

Peter's statement at the end of verse three means that our hope in Christ was secured by "the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" – an actual, historical, bodily resurrection from the dead. In Revelation 1:18 we have the actual words of the Lord Jesus Christ Who said,

18 I am he that liveth , and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Thus we have it on the highest authority that His life on earth was real, His death was real, and so was His resurrection! Never doubt any part of it for even a moment.

We have already seen what our hope is, but note the way in which it is expressed in verse 4 by the Apostle Peter. (Read.)

The Apostle Paul in Romans 8:16-17 had this to say about believers as heirs and having an inheritance:

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God , and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

Our inheritance is not just heaven (although it will be unspeakably wonderful to be there), but it is glorification, meaning conformity to Christ. This is also our hope, as we have seen. Paul also spoke of our inheritance in his epistle to the Ephesian believers. Cf. Ephesians 1:10-14:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Our inheritance, then, is heaven, plus the fact that we shall "be to the praise of His glory." We shall not only see His glory, but we shall "be to the praise of His glory," made like Him. This is astounding truth. But how do we know that we are going to make it? A part of that answer is that we have the Holy Spirit in us now, and a major part of His ministry to us is that He already is making us like Christ. Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18. I don't very often use the Revised Standard Version, but I particularly like the translation of 2 Corinthians 3:18 as it is in the RSV. Let me read it to you:

18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

You and I may not realize it, but from the moment you trusted in Christ as your Savior, the Holy Spirit has been at work in your heart making you like Christ. And He works by degrees. He still has a lot to do in me, and

you probably would say that He has a lot to do in you. But never fear: He is going to complete that work. Cf. Phil. 1:6 and even here in 1 Peter 2:21-23. (Read.)

But how do we know that we are going to make it? What did Peter say about our inheritance? Four things; notice what they are in verse 4.

- 1:4** Notice the four things that Peter mentioned about our inheritance, that is, if you know the Lord:
- 1) It is incorruptible.
 - 2) It is undefiled.
 - 3) It does not fade away.
 - 4) It is “reserved in heaven for you.”

What do these mean?

- 1) It is not like silver and gold which can be corrupted so as to become worthless.
- 2) It cannot be changed and defiled by something else, or anybody else, nor can it be stolen.
- 3) It is still as glorious as we were told that it would be.
- 4) It is waiting to be claimed as each one of us arrives in glory.

There is not an investment on earth, nor has there ever been, nor will there ever be, that has the guarantee that our inheritance has. Many inheritances have been wasted, or stolen, but even when they are received by the heirs, they cannot survive the death of the heir. Our inheritance in Christ is eternal.

Alford, in his commentary called *The Greek New Testament*, explains our inheritance in this way: “It is in *substance*, incorruptible; in *purity*, undefiled; in *beauty*, unfading” (IV. 333).

And then Peter said that it is “reserved in heaven for you.” The tense and voice of the verb indicate that this has been done in the past, and that it continues in the present. This is like all of the Word of God, all of the promises of God. They are secure, changeless, just was true as they always have been and always will be.

But at the same time our inheritance is being reserved for us in heaven, something is being done with us while we are still on earth.

1:5 We are being kept. A different verb is used here from the word “reserved” in verse 4. This actually means *guarded*. Wayne Grudem says that the use of this verb in the NT “shows that the word can mean both ‘kept from escaping’ and ‘protected from attack,’ and perhaps both kinds of guarding are intended here. The form of the verb that is used here (a present passive participle) emphasizes the fact that we are continually being guarded. So we are protected from any foolish action that we might take, while being protected from an enemy, even the Devil, who might want to take us away from the Lord so as to rob us also of our inheritance. Cf. John 10:27-30; 3:16; 17:11b-12.

Remember that Peter was writing to suffering saints, suffering because of their faith, their trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. And the word “through faith” indicate that their faith will be preserved even though as Peter would go on to say, “though it be tried with fire.” Perhaps Peter was thinking here of his own failure when he denied that he even knew the Lord. Prior to his denial the Lord had told him what we read in Luke 22:31-32:

- 31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:
- 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Satan did exactly that to Peter. His faith faltered, but it did not fail. And here in 1 Peter we find Peter doing

exactly what the Lord told him to do: he was strengthening his brethren who were going through their own time of severe trials. The power of God is never more evident than when the faith of believers stands firm under trials, regardless of how severe they might be.

The salvation that will be revealed “in the last time,” when the Lord comes, is the future tense of salvation, or glorification. Everything is “ready” in heaven, that is, prepared, and they have been “ready” since the Lord ascended back to the Father. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, plus all of the saints in heaven, and even the angels (which we will learn about at the end of verse 12), are all waiting, and we should be waiting in great anticipation also, for that wonderful day when all of the redeemed will be glorified, sin will be a thing of the past with all of its tragic results, and we all will be glorified, made like our dear Savior and Lord. What a day that will be! That day is finally coming. It has been set from eternity past. Everything is ready. We need to make sure that we are ready. That means making sure that Christ is our Savior, but it also means that we are living the way He wants us to live.

March 13, 2006

But as we come to verse 6 we find that salvation does not exempt us from suffering. In fact, it is often the reason why the Lord’s people suffer. So at this point in the introduction Peter spoke of:

2. Their joy in salvation while suffering (1:6-9).

1:6 From what the Apostle Peter said in this verse, we are to learn that the key to rejoicing whatever our circumstances might be, is to have found our chief joy in our salvation, not only in what we already have, but the glorious prospect that is still ahead of us in heaven. As I have tried to bring out in the outline which I have given you, Peter was reviewing for them in verses 3,4, and 5 the true nature, or character, of our salvation. These verses cover the whole gamut, the entire range, of salvation. He didn’t say everything that could be said, but he spoke of the beginning, our new birth, and our ultimate destiny. We can even go back into verses 1 and 2 to learn about our election by God, our sanctification by the Spirit, and the continuing power of the blood of Christ to keep cleansing us from sin. We are not only saved, but we have just seen in verse 5 that we are “kept,” kept from escaping and kept from all attacks from within and without. Not only that but our inheritance is in the safekeeping of God Himself in heaven. So we are totally secure in our salvation. It cannot be taken away from us, nor can we lose it.

So, when Peter said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice,” or *in which ye greatly rejoice*, he was speaking of our salvation. “Greatly rejoice” is the translation of the verb. It properly means *to jump for joy*. It means *to be overjoyed!* Peter was not speaking of some ridiculous outburst or emotional demonstration, but he was speaking of a joy deeply rooted in the heart, really a person’s deep joy, and joy which only a true believer can understand because only a true believer can experience it. Looking at some of the places in the NT where this verb (*ἀγαλλιάω*) is used, will help us to understand the meaning.

Our Lord used it in His Sermon on the Mount, as He was concluding the Beatitudes. It is translated, “be exceeding glad.” And it is said also in the context of suffering. Cf. Matthew 5:11-12:

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Mary, the mother of our Lord, used it as she began her Magnificat:

46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour (Luke 1:46-47).

Our Lord used this verb in His prayer to the Father in Luke 10:21

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

Our Lord said that Abraham had this kind of joy. We read what He said in John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.”

When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem to the thousands that were gathered before him, he referred to David’s words in Psalm 16 as he anticipated in his day the coming of the Lord. Here is what Peter said quoted David. You will find these words in Acts 2:25-27

25 For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Luke, in describing the time when the Philippian jailor was saved, had this to say:

34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:34).

Actually Peter used this verb two more times in 1 Peter. See 1:8 and 4:13.

In the book of the Revelation, just before the Second Coming of Christ, the Apostle John described what he heard in these words:

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (Rev. 19:6-7).

As we read over these passages, we need to ask ourselves, “Does this verb describe how we feel about our salvation?” Or could it be that we felt that was about the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior when we first were drawn to Him, but we don’t feel that way now, and perhaps it has been a long time since we felt that way. When was the last time that you gave thanks to the Lord for saving you? We ought to do it every day, not just because it is a good thing to do, but because we can’t but express the deep feeling of love that we have for the Lord. This is the joy that will give us the support we need when we are going through trials. How do we get it if we have lost it? By thinking about salvation, as Peter was doing here, and about the blessings that have come to us because we are saved. Think of His promises. Think of our inheritance. Think of the coming of the Lord when we will see Him, be like Him, and be with Him and all of the people who are going to be in heaven when we get there. But all of this is so that we will love the Lord with all of our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. Actually Peter is telling us in this epistle what it is that we need.

And why do we need them? We need them because our days here on earth are very often not what we would like for them to be. Note what Peter said, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or better, trials). Charles Erdman, who was the Professor of Practical at Princeton Theological Seminary in the days when Princeton and its faculty stood solidly for the

truth of the Word of God, says in his brief commentary on 1 Peter that these were people, believers, who “were suffering from hatred, suspicion, violence, slander, and cruel persecution; nevertheless, in view of their coming ‘salvation,’ they were above to rejoice” (p. 57), and to “greatly rejoice.”

But notice the words, “though now for a season.” We could translate this, “though now for a little while.” God has set limits on what people can do to us. The enemies of the Gospel have a limited time in which they can cause trouble for the people of God. This expression has several ways it can be explained. This little while is like nothing in comparison with eternity. That is one explanation. But it also means that the Lord will eventually stop it, or else He will take us home to heaven. Trials make us think more frequently and with greater joy about the coming of the Lord, as Peter mentioned in verse 7.

“If need be” could be translated, *if it must be*. Do you remember what I have said about this word “must.” It speaks of a divine appointment. Peter wants us to know, as he will tell us later, that we are not to think it strange that trials will come. It may come from people, but it is always that which is ordained by God for our blessing, for our spiritual growth, our sanctification. In trials we pray. In trials we humble ourselves before the Lord. In trials we pay closer attention when we read the Word, or when we hear it taught or preached. In trials we confess our sins.

And Peter spoke here of times of trials as times of “heaviness.” What did he mean by that? It is a word that has to do with sorrow or sadness or grief. Christians have their sad times. Sorrow touches all of our lives. But we can thank God that because of the Gospel, we don’t sorrow like people do who don’t have the hope that you and I have in Christ.

But what did Peter mean by “manifold temptations”? I think that we probably should be talking about *manifold trials*. The same Greek word can be translated either way. Sometimes a trial is also a temptation, but God gives us trials, but He never tempts us to sin. If a trial causes us to sin, like it did Job’s wife, the fault is ours, not God’s. Remember what James told us on this subject. You will find his words in James 1:13-15:

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

But what did Peter mean by “manifold temptations?” He meant that there are many different kinds of trials. Loneliness can be a trial. The loss of a job can be a trial. Sickness is always a trial. Death, ours, or the death of someone dear to us, is one of the greatest trials. Persecution is a trial. A foolish decision can lead to trials. Broken fellowship can be a trial. This world is a place of trials. But they all have one thing in common, and Peter takes that up in the next verse.

1:7 Every trial is “a trial of” our “faith.” It is a test as to whether or not we are going to trust God, or we going to continue to try to work things out for ourselves like we usually do. The Christian life is a life of faith. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11:6). “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 3:11).

But as difficult as our trials are, they are “precious,” even though it means being “tried with fire.” The mention of “gold” and “fire” suggests the testing that proves that “gold” is genuine. So our trials are precious because they prove under testing that our faith is real. It is not mere profession, but pure faith. A child of God will often falter under testing (because we are totally weak in ourselves), but trials show us that we do not have the

resources to deal with our trials by our own strength, and so, often it takes time, it is in times of testing that our faith is strengthened, and God is glorified because faith like everything else in the Christian life is a gift from God. Jesus Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Faith comes from hearing and hearing and hearing the Word of God. See Hebrews 12:2 and Rom. 10:17. As Peter closes this verse, he links what is going on now to that which will take place “at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

When Peter speaks of “praise and honor and glory” when the Lord returns, Dr. Grudem raises the question, Is this “praise, and honor, and glory” that we give to God, or that God gives to us? He, Hiebert, and others, including Calvin, take it in the context of Peter seeking to encourage the people of God in their sufferings, that when the presence of Christ will be revealed for believers to see, the fact that they have trusted Him in their afflictions, will be rewarded by Him as He confers upon His people “praise and honor and glory.” The people of God may be hated and despised and persecuted to death by the enemies of the Gospel here on earth, but as they trust Him through their trials, they will be rewarded with “praise and honor and glory” at the coming of the Lord.

We all know, or should know, that even down to eating and drinking, or whatever else we do, we are to do all to God’s glory. And so it is not something that we should be surprised about to learn that the Lord will take note of this in the day when we stand before Him. Probably each of these three words has special significance as we think of standing before the judgment seat of Christ. We are not going to be judged for our sins. They have been forgiven, and will not be remembered against us. But we will be judged for our works, and how we have sought to please God day by day. So “praise” probably has to do with the Lord’s, “Well, done, thou good and faithful servant.” The “honor,” to be seen in “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” The “glory” will be the extent to which we will be conformed in our eternal condition to be made like our blessed Lord. What an incentive this should be for all of us to be primarily concerned about pleasing the Lord from our hearts every day that we live.

But Peter did not end his statement with verse 7. He continued in verse 8.

1:8 We know that the Apostle Peter was very well acquainted with the Lord Jesus. It is difficult to read any of the four Gospels without coming to the name of Peter and giving us more information about our Lord’s involvement in Peter’s life, and Peter’s involvement in the Lord’s life. The relationship between Peter and the Lord, was a very close relationship. He had seen the Lord time and time again. In fact, Peter, along with James and John, saw the Lord in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. But Peter was writing to many believers who had never seen the Lord. Most of them were not even saved when the Lord was on earth. But even though their faith was a gift from God, and they could take no credit for their own salvation, yet for them was a unique blessing that not even Peter could claim. It was this: They loved the Lord although they had never seen Him – “Whom having not seen, ye love.”

This ought to remind us of our Lord’s words to Thomas, one of our Lord’s disciples who was not with the others the first time the risen Lord appeared to them, responded to the disciples who said that they had seen the Lord, and these were his words as reported by the Apostle John in John 20:24-29:

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

These words applied to those suffering saints to whom Peter was writing. They did not even apply to Peter himself. And what is even more wonderful as far as we are concerned, *they apply to all of us who are here today*. We haven't seen the Lord, and yet we not only know Him, but *we love Him!* The persecutors of the believers to whom Peter was writing this epistle, were just like you and I are. They hadn't seen the Lord either, but they loved Him. And they loved Him so much that they were willing to suffer for their faith in Him rather than to deny Him. I have given my life, as many of you have, to telling people about the Lord, and encouraging them to trust the Lord, but I still have never seen Him. When you stop to think about it, it sounds a little wacky, doesn't it? Wacky means crazy, silly, utterly irrational, erratic. No wonder that it seems to be a lot of foolishness to most people. But I know I speak for you when I say that I have no doubt but that everything that the Bible says about the Lord, is absolutely true!

But we not only love Him, but we believe Him. We trust Him. We have faith in Him. Our love and our faith may neither be as strong as we would like for them to be, but even though we have never seen Him, nor have we ever met anyone who has seen Him, He is the One Whose very fellowship give us "joy unspeakable and full of glory." We "rejoice" (there is our word again that we met in verse 6) with a joy which cannot be adequately expressed in words. The world knows nothing of such a joy, is not interested in hearing about it, and is presently doing all that it can to keep it from even being mentioned. Grudem called this "unalterable and exalted joy" (p. 67).

1:9 The goal of our faith is the salvation of our souls. Salvation is by faith alone, by grace alone, and by Christ alone. Peter is declaring here that salvation from sin comes through just one Person, and His Name is, as you all know, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But before we go any farther in the introduction to this epistle of Peter, let me ask you a question, and I direct this question to myself as well as to you. Are you as excited about salvation as Peter was? Do you have the same kind of joy in the Lord that He had? Do you love the Lord Jesus so much that you can't find the words to express how much you love Him? We are all going to fail in our trials if we don't stand on the same ground that Peter did. Nothing could be more important than the conviction that he expressed to us here. It doesn't seem possible, but it is absolutely true, that we can be going through a severe trial, and at the same time be so happy in our souls that words fail us when we try to express how much we love Him. We love Him because of what He has done for us in the past, what He continues to do for us in the present, and for what He is going to do in the future. When we finally see Him, and are made like Him, we will be with Him forever. These are subjects for constant praise.

March 20, 2006

Peter used "salvation" here in its fullest meaning – our ultimate glorification. "The end" speaks of the ultimate purpose of our salvation, our inheritance, being conformed to the likeness of Christ.

The NASB translates this verse, "Obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls." The word translated in the KJV, "receiving," and in the NASB, "obtaining," is a present participle in the Greek which carries with it the idea of continuously receiving, or continuously obtaining. It has to do with our progress, or growth, in the Christian life. We don't realize all at once the purpose of our salvation, but it is a continuing process as we continue to believe, or to trust in the Lord, and as we learn to rejoice in this marvelous salvation. And our faith and joy are to be exercised in a growing love for the Lord Jesus Christ

Himself. Again let me say that the more we love Him, and the more we trust Him, the more we will continue to receive, or obtain, or grow in the purpose for which we have been saved. It is very important that we understand our part in progressive sanctification. This is what Peter was talking about.

In verse 10 we come to what Peter had to say about:

3. Salvation and the Old Testament prophets (1:10-12).

Peter did two things in this section: (1) He shows that the salvation that the OT prophets wrote about, was not a different salvation from NT salvation, but that it is all the same. There is only one way of salvation. Not as much is revealed about it in the OT as in the NT, but it is all the same. (2) He shows that there were things that they wrote which they did not understand, and so they studied their own writings. This is evidence of divine inspiration. It also shows that salvation is far more wonderful than anything that they could possibly have conceived if they had been planning salvation themselves. Fausset, in the JFB series, wrote:

The magnitude of this “salvation” is proved by the earnestness with which “prophets” and even “angels” searched into it. From the beginning of the world it has been testified to by the Holy Spirit (VI, 599).

1:10 Peter seems reluctant to leave the word “salvation,” because here we have it again. The two words, “enquired and searched diligently” expresses how constantly and intensely they searched their own writings to learn all that they possibly could about this wonderful word of God called “salvation.” They did not want to overlook any part of it or miss any detail. What an example they are to us as far as the study of the Word of God is concerned. We miss so much because we do not really search the Scripture as we should. Nobody ever learns it all; that is the reason we need to keep searching and searching the Scriptures, being careful not to miss anything, but also being careful to remain within the limits of what we have in the Scriptures.

“Who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you” seems to indicate that they knew that the revelation they had was not complete. “Grace” is used here as a synonym for salvation. It is all of grace. They knew that they did not work for it; it was a gift. And they were very conscious that they did not deserve it. They deserved judgment, not grace, and the same is true of us. That is another reason why we need to rejoice constantly in our salvation.

1:11 The word “searching” here is a verb of which the word “searched” in verse 9 is a compound, that is, they are both the same verb, but in verse 10 the verb has an ἐκ attached to the beginning of the verb, which gives the idea of “diligently.” The verb in verse 9 is an aorist which just speaks of what they did, and did extensively, while the verb here in verse 10 is in the present which indicates that they were doing this constantly. They never stopped. Hiebert says that the first in verse 10 means they did it zealously, and the verb in verse 11 means they did it carefully. See p. 73. And he gave Daniel 7:15-16 and 9:1-3 as examples of what Peter was saying.

The prophets were searching for “what,” that is, *what* the Messiah would do; “what manner of time” meant *when* it would all take place. They knew that the Spirit of Christ was in them and revealing to them what they were to write (“Christ” here clearly meaning, Messiah – Christ being the NT Greek equivalent of Messiah, the OT Hebrew). This confirms what Peter wrote in his second epistle that those who wrote the Scriptures did so as they were “moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21).

“When It testified” – the translators of the KJV used it to agree with “Spirit” which in Greek is neuter, but it should be translated, He. There is no question but that the Scriptures speak of Spirit as a Person. Even here the

Spirit signified and testified, which are evidences of His personality. The testimony of the Spirit is the Scriptures. “Beforehand” meaning before any of the predictions had taken place. This included the virgin birth, the Lord’s birthplace, etc. But particularly “the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glory that should follow.” The prophets had the right order although it was not always clear to the Jewish people. We see in reading the Gospels that the disciples were looking for Jesus to be glorified over all the earth, but that they rejected any idea of His sufferings and death.

What did the prophets learn?

1:12 Obviously they learned that what the Spirit had revealed to them was that their writings which they searched so carefully and continuously, had to do with the Messiah, the Christ, His sufferings and His glory. But as to *when* those prophecies would be fulfilled, it wasn’t that they would live to see them fulfilled, but, as Peter said, it was “unto us they did minister those things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the Gospel unto you with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.”

What exactly did Peter mean by these words?

They mean that somehow it was “revealed,” a revelation from God, that the prophecies they wrote, would not be fulfilled in their lifetimes, but it was (the best reading is not “us,” but *you*) unto you, in this particular instance, the “strangers” of 1:1, who had seen the prophecies of the sufferings of Christ fulfilled, and a part as well as a guarantee in the resurrection of Christ, that “the glory” was sure to follow. Peter says that the OT prophets, while surely ministering to their own generations, were ministering, or serving, those to whom the Apostle Peter was writing. It was for their comfort, their encouragement, and for the strengthening of their faith – “for you.” It was for “the elect strangers.”

It seems that here Peter was stressing the importance of reading the Scriptures as being addressed to us, or as a preacher or teacher of the Word can say to a group of fellow-believers, “This is for you. God has placed this in His Word for you! Take it personally, and treat it personally. Accept it like the prophets did who wrote it. Search these things out for yourself, diligently and carefully. Don’t miss a word. The Spirit of God has revealed it to those who have been preaching the Gospel to you “with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven.”

We need to understand from these verses how important the ministry of the Spirit is. He enabled the prophets to write it. It has been preserved for “you” who have been born of the Spirit. The Spirit empowers the preaching of the Gospel by those who have been sent “to you.” None of this has been by chance, or by accident, but all under the sovereign ministry of God, the Holy Spirit. We have never seen the Spirit, but the Bible is evidence of His existence, and we are trophies of His work. What we could never have understood by ourselves, He has taught us. And what we could never have become, He has made us. Peter was saying, in effect, “Look at your Bible. Hold it very lovingly, and read it constantly and carefully. Pray for the Spirit to teach you, because all that God has been pleased to tell us about His Son, has been especially for you. If I were teaching particular redemption, this is one passage that I could surely use.

We have all heard this Gospel, this good news, from somebody, and maybe from many *somebodies*. *But the Holy Spirit has been behind it all. From eternity past the Lord has always been thinking of you.* If this would not have made those suffering saints rejoice, nothing would. But they did rejoice, and rejoiced with great hope and peace.

“Which things the angels desire to look into.”

Fausset says that the magnitude of this salvation is shown by the attention given to it by the prophets of the OT, *and even by the angels!* Obviously these are the elect angels, the good angels, the unfallen angels. You know, Christ did not die for angels. But they are interested in salvation, keenly interested. The word that Peter used for “desire” is the word from which the Greek word for *lust*, or even *covet*, comes. It means that they have an intensely strong desire to learn all that they can about salvation. And Peter used the present tense of the verb to show that even though these angels have been living throughout the history of the human race, they still are learning, and still desire to know all that it is possible for them to know about salvation and the Gospel. This kind of lusting and coveting is OK. The Lord Jesus even said that “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). Just think, they have been looking into salvation for thousands of years, and they are still learning.

Grudem says regarding the verb “look” that this is a verb which describes the look of an outsider, and that those upon the angels are looking, are not aware that anyone is watching them. The verb even indicates stooping or bending so as to get a closer look at those the angels are watching. And from the context of this verse, it would indicate that the angels are looking to see how those who have been saved perform when trials come and life gets difficult. The angels know that everyone has trials, but what they are interested in knowing is, does it make a difference when trials come, if you have been saved, if you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior? They know it ought to, but does it in all cases? No, they find, not in all, but sometimes Christians have a tough time when trials first come, and then they see how the Savior helps His own people when they are in trouble.

What are angels learning from us who know the Lord when trials come?

These are all very heart-searching words, aren't they? How important it is not only to know what the Gospel is, but to believe it! Salvation is a work of God, a transforming work, the most amazing work that can be done on this earth, when God by His grace works in the hearts of people, making them new creatures, new creations.

March 21, 2006

And so, as we come to the end of verse 12 we come to the end of Peter's introduction to this very important, and very encouraging, epistle. It is very important that we understand the truth of these first twelve verses. It is difficult to see how we can make real progress in our salvation unless we know the truth that Peter has emphasized in these opening twelve verses. We would do well to go back over them again and again throughout our lives.

I mentioned in the beginning that Peter's emphasis in this epistle is practical. The doctrine of Scripture is always followed by the practical. Or, to state it another way, the doctrinal is always accompanied by the practical. The doctrine without the practical application is incomplete. And those people who say, “Don't give me doctrine; I just want the practical,” are expressing a desire that is never taught in Scripture. How can we live in fellowship with the Lord if we don't really know what salvation is. If the angels have been looking into this doctrine of salvation for over six thousand years, and still have not exhausted what can be, and is to be, known about salvation, then it is certain that none of us in the brief time we are here on earth, will be able to know it all. So we all need to keep reading the Bible. We need to keep asking the Lord to teach us about this wonderful salvation, both the doctrinal and the practical. Some Christians are strong on doctrine, but weak on the practical exhortations of Scripture. Others are strong on seeking to do the practical, but they don't know doctrine. We need both. And we see this all through Scripture, in both the OT as well as in the NT.

So, starting in verse 13 of chapter 1 we have:

II. THE EXHORTATIONS (1 Peter 1:13-5:9).

Now with all that I have said about doctrine and the practical application of the doctrine, we need to understand that when the writers of Scripture deal with doctrine, you will also find practical teaching. In the same way, when the writers of Scripture deal with practical matters, they do not leave doctrine behind. So, while, especially in the NT epistles, we have doctrine and then the practice of the doctrine, they are never completely separated. There is always some intermingling of the two.

I doubt if the apostles wrote with an outline in mind. They certainly were very reasonable and logical in what they wrote and the manner of their writing, but we use outline to help us see the order in which they wrote. I have divided this practical section into two parts: Section One in 1 Peter 1:13 - 3:12, and Section Two in 3:13 - 5:9. I hope the outline I have given you will help you to see the difference between the two. In Section One Peter has dealt with the needs of believers, and the needs of us in the separate groups in which we can be divided such as husbands and wives, and so on. But you even have a little of this in chapter 5 which is in Section Two. But the main emphasis in Section Two appears to be the benefits which suffering produces in our lives.