

Lesson 10 – 1 Peter:

- I. Believers’ faith and hope in the world 1:3-2:10
 - A. Rejoicing in the hope of Christ’s return 1:3-12

v. 3 – “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance – an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.

So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.

You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.

This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ’s suffering and his great glory afterward.

They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.”

In most New Testament books or letters, the greeting is followed by a section of thanksgiving or praise. In verses 3 – 9, Peter praises God that his mercy brings new spiritual life, which produces confident expectation about the future despite sufferings in the meantime.

v. 3 – “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation.” The Israelites blessed God as the Creator of the world, and their Redeemer from Egypt. However, in this verse Peter (as representative for all Christians) describe God in a distinctive way. Christians bless God as the Father of the incarnate Son and the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Thus, He is to be recognized as the Author of new creation and of spiritual redemption.

Jesus is also uniquely described as “our Lord Jesus Christ,” that is, as God’s promised Messiah, as the divinely exalted Lord of the universe, and as appointed by God in the

discharge of these two offices to be “ours” – meaning to do in our interest and for our benefit, individually and corporately. God made this Jesus to be Lord and Christ when He raised Him from the dead. It is in His resurrection where all ‘our’ hope takes rise as like our risen Lord, our hope is living! This hope not only is our expectation, but also our life, because through the same resurrection of Christ, we ourselves are born again and share in Christ’s undying life.

The Greek verb ‘anagennan’ means to “begat again” or “born again” is only used here and verse 23, it is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. This verb expresses a decisive change of status and prospect, wholly due to the decisive work of Christ for us, a work successfully consummated in Christ’s resurrection.

This act and work of God for our salvation is the manifestation of God’s abundant mercy. Mercy is a word specially used in the New Testament of God’s kindness in bringing in the sinner to share in His salvation and in the glories or riches of His Christ.

“Born again” refers to the New Birth (see v. 23) where the same Greek verb is rendered “having been born again.” The living Christ make possible “great expectation.”

v. 4 – “and we have a priceless inheritance – an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay.” Unlike ancient Israel’s “inheritance” of Canaan, the Christian’s inheritance is eternal life in the Kingdom of God. Peter uses three negative compounds to indicate that, unlike any inheritance in this world, the Christian’s inheritance is not exposed to destruction or defilement from outside, or decay from inside. It cannot, like the earthly Canaan, be ravaged or polluted; nor will it ever wear out or waste away. The Greek language here suggests that the Christian’s inheritance has already been carefully set aside or reserved (a perfect participle in the Greek), and so is in consequence waiting for us to enjoy. At the highest, this inheritance, that should be possessed in the Lord Himself, see Ps. 16:5 – “Lord, you alone are my inheritance, my cup of blessing. You guard all that is mine.” (NLT). Those who ‘seek those things which are above’ (Col. 3:1-3 NKJV) find their satisfaction in Christ, who sits on the right hand of God. Additionally, the full possession of this inheritance will bring the complementary reward of participation in Christ’s glory. When He who “is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” (Col. 3:4 NLT). As 1 John 3:2 (NLT) says, “Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but He has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He really is.” Another wonderful fact is that His presence in our hearts (indwelling Holy Spirit) is the “earnest” or the “the guarantee” of its full possession. See Ephesians 1:14 – “The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

v. 5 – “And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see.” As in this verse, and elsewhere in the New Testament, Salvation is past, present, and future. This verse points out that our final glorious salvation is at the Second Coming of Christ. This wonderful inheritance is not only prepared for our enjoyment, but it is being continuously “guarded” – Greek word ‘phrouroumenous’ – a present participle and is a military term. It

reflects that this inheritance is so preserved, throughout our earthly pilgrimage, by nothing less than by divine power, that we may safely reach the goal of full possession. The ‘salvation’ here is the hope – confident expectation and a consummation of the future. This salvation is fully prepared beforehand by God (Luke 2:30-31) – “I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!” We are waiting for it to be fully manifested, but we do so with assurance of its realization.

vv. 6-7 – “So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So, when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world.” Our assured prospect of an inheritance and this preservation by God’s power should give us ground for increasing joy, even in the midst of possible trials, especially when God allows the trials to find out by testing the genuineness of our professed faith. In God’s eyes such true faith is more precious than pure gold, which has its genuineness tested by fire. When Jesus is publicly revealed to the whole world, His people who have trusted Him as God’s Christ – Messiah, will have proven His power to guard them and fill them with joyful hope – confident expectation.

These tests are for ‘a short season’ or “a little while” emphasizing the short duration compared to the eternal reward. The tests may even be inevitable, but the Greek word ‘deon’ suggests a reference to the kind of divine necessity that Jesus Himself saw in His own sufferings. Such trials are sometimes a ‘must’ for God’s people if His will is to be done. See 1 Peter 3:17 – “Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong!” The Greek word for ‘trials’ is ‘Peirasmos’ used here does not mean the inner wrestling with evil inclination, but undeserved suffering from without, according to C. Bigg – The Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude (The International Critical Commentary), 1901.

For the believer, whose hope is in the promised inheritance or salvation, and who recognizes that the trials are meant in God’s providence to serve positive ends for Christ’s glory and the Christian’s spiritual profit, can actually take delight in being grieved. The Greek word “apokalupis” used for ‘appearing’ or ‘revealed’ does not suggest the ‘coming’ of someone that has been absent but rather suggests the visible unveiling or disclosure of someone who has been all the time spiritually and invisibly present! See 1 Corinthians 1:7 – “Now you have every spiritual gift you need as you eagerly wait for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And see 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8 – “And God will provide rest for you who are being persecuted and also for us when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven. He will come with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, bringing judgment on those who don’t know God and on those who refuse to obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus.”

vv. 8,9 “You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.” Not only is there great and continuous

joy possible now in the middle of trials, but there are also causes of even greater joy. These other causes include:

- 1) Realized fellowship with the living unseen Lord,
- 2) Active love for Him,
- 3) Daily counting upon Him.

These are here and now, and in a real sense the measure of salvation in our soul. And all of these will give a greater experience of present unceasing joy. This joy baffles description in words and is shared with us before the glory of the upcoming full revelation.

This verse contrasts the here and now with what will be fully revealed in Jesus at His second coming. We have knowledge of Him now by faith – this is our present experience. This was the same experience that Peter’s readers had, they had not seen Jesus during His earthly life, as had Peter. Yet, they were giving Him their love and hearts in fellowship with Him and each other. They could not see Him now, yet we will all see Him at His appearing.

The Greek word used for ‘believing or trust’ is the participle ‘pisteuontes’ and is in the present continuous tense. It denotes a habitual or typical activity. This is accompanied by a phrase, ‘in whom’ expressing movement into, entrance into or union with. This means that believing or trusting in Him finds full expression, when, being sure of the presence and the trustworthiness of Christ. The person exercising faith in Jesus comes to Him in self-commitment and continues to actively rest and rely on Him.

This results in our “rejoicing” in Him with ‘a glorious and inexpressible joy.’ This means that we are unable to express or declare in words our joy.

Our reward for trusting in Him is ‘salvation of our souls.’ The Greek structure of this verse suggests that true faith in Christ, will bring such a reckoning on our part and is accompanied by such assurance that the future reward is as good as already being enjoyed. The actual ‘salvation’ is still in the future. This phrase indicates the reason for the inexpressible and glorious nature of the resulting joy.

It is important to note that Christ will bring into our expression three responsive activities: hope in verse 3, faith in verses 7 & 9, and love in verse 8, with joy added as an inevitable consequence and all centered supremely on Jesus Christ as alive from the dead.

vv. 10-12 “This salvation was something even the prophets wanted to know more about when they prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you. They wondered what time or situation the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ’s suffering and his great glory afterward.

They were told that their messages were not for themselves, but for you. And now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen.”

Our salvation is very great: the Old Testament prophets predicted it, and angels long to investigate it. Though the Old Testament prophets had an incomplete vision of the Christ event, they foretold through the Spirit ‘this glorious salvation’ that Christians now have and will experience. Much was revealed about the future to the Old Testament prophets, but they did not know precisely when or how the Salvation they predicted would come

about. The Greek translated “what time” could also mean ‘what person.’ The prophets knew that a Messiah would come and that He would suffer before He was glorified, but they did not know who that Messiah would be. The phrase ‘eagerly watching’ in the Greek is the same Greek word used when the disciples looked into Jesus’ empty tomb.

We must note that Peter is speaking Jew and Gentile here. When you review various prophecies from the Old Testament, we see that the prophets were predicting salvation to come to the Jew and the Gentile – the ‘grace’ was destined to come ‘unto you – Gentiles,’ and that ‘sufferings’ were destined to happen to Christ.

The prophets testified to three things:

- 1) The God’s Christ must suffer – Is. 52:14- 15;
- 2) That this for Him was the way of entrance into His glory – Luke 24:25-27;
- 3) That among the results of this suffering would be the extension of saving grace to the Gentiles.

The suffering of God’s Christ and that Gentiles should be saved were unexpected by the Jews, in spite of the explicit prophecies and promises of the Old Testament Scriptures.

The Prophets testified, not by their own witness, but by the Spirit of Christ which was in them. The surprising content of the prophecies thus made them (the prophets) eager to discover more concerning its full meaning – particularly the time and manner of its fulfillment. This proves that what they were prophesying about was not of their own imagination or devising. Rather, they were anointed by God’s spirit to pronounce this message of Christ. No doubt they were curious and wanted to know more and they were told that they were not ministering to themselves but to those who were to live in the coming of fulfillment. This statement confirms Paul’s repeated statement that the Old Testament Scriptures were meant in the purpose of God to provide instruction for Christian believers. So, we Christians can find in them (Scriptures) God-given help to appreciate the grace of God. As Paul says in 2 Tim. 3:15 – “**They (Scriptures) are able to make (us) wise unto salvation through faith which in in Christ Jesus.**” We must be careful to not let the scientific and critical approach rob us of the distinctive and divinely intended Christian use of the Old Testament.

Notice what Peter says in verse 12 – “**and now this Good News has been announced to you by those who preached in the power of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.**” The primary concern of the activity of the Spirit, as given to others, is to glorify Christ, to bear witness to Him, and to show Christ to men. See John 15:26 & 27 – “**But I will send you the advocate – the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.**”

This is what the Holy Spirit did in Old Testament times through the prophets; He testified beforehand of Christ (see Rev. 19:10 – “**Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said, “No, don’t worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers and sisters who testify about their faith in Jesus. Worship only God. For the essence of prophecy is to give a clear witness for Jesus.**” At Pentecost there was a special fresh sending of the same Spirit from heaven by the exalted Christ, for the same purpose, to ensure that the Good News about Jesus as the Christ is preached to the ends of the earth.

See Acts 1:8 – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

So, there is a Spirit-inspired unity in the testimony of the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles and gospel missionaries. It is through their combined witness that men embrace God’s saving grace in Christ, and His Church is built.

See Eph. 2:18-22 – “Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us. So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family. Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.”

The last sentence of verse 12 is rather interesting. Peter notes that this Good News announced to all mankind is so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen. The Greek verb ‘parakuptein’ translates as “to look into” and means to ‘stoop or bend down to look.’ The angels take such an intense and wondering interest in what God is doing here on earth for the salvation of men, that they bend down to eagerly watch!

Here are some important summary points or takeaways from these verses:

- 1) **Deeply love** and **believe** in Jesus, even though you cannot see Him.
- 2) **Interpret** the Old Testament with the revelation in the New Testament. **Study** the messianic prophecies in light of their fulfillment in Jesus’ life. **Worship** the Lord as you see the miracle of who Jesus is as revealed in Scripture.
- 3) **Understand** that the Holy Spirit makes you holy, set apart by the blood of Jesus. Obedience is to be our response.
- 4) **Understand** that our inheritance of salvation in Jesus is a living hope, kept for us in heaven where it cannot be ruined or fade away. **Know** that God’s mighty power is keeping you through faith for salvation.
- 5) **Remember** that as you endure suffering, your faith is being refined as with fire. **Value** your faith more than gold. Look toward the coming of Jesus, so that your faith, having been tested, will result in praise, honor, and glory in Jesus.
- 6) **Understand** that the goal of your faith is salvation.