

As we continue our study in 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, he continues his exhortation of encouragement to the pilgrims of the dispersion — that is, those who had to flee their homes because of their faith in Christ as Savior . Remember he has told them a multitude of things.

He first reminds them (and us) that our true citizenship is in heaven and that we are just passing through this world on our way there. I was reminded of this on vacation in Vermont, with the million dollar homes with spectacular views, and the fact that we were staying in an 800 square foot cottage that is for sale, for what we think is about \$200,000. Everything is temporary.

Peter then tells his readers a number of things about their salvation – that they had been elected according to the foreknowledge of God, and that the whole Trinity was active in their salvation.

He also tells them that they have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and place reserved in heaven for them – a place that is perfect – a place that is guarded by God Himself as one of the blessings of their salvation.

This place that is reserved in heaven for them is guaranteed – it is a sure thing, despite the trials and tribulations that they might be going through. He tells them that these trials and tribulations are a test to see whether their faith and salvation is genuine – because the bottom line is, the salvation of their souls. Again, this life on earth is temporary ... it is fleeting ... it will pass away.

Peter then tells them this great salvation was the fulfillment of the multitude Old Testament prophecies. Again, remember, that those Old Testament prophets did not see things completely – they only saw shadows of things to come.

Those 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians saw more than the ancient prophets did ... and we see more than those ancient prophets did – because we have seen the fulfillment of the prophecies in the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

But even though we have seen the fulfillment in the words of Scripture, we still don't see the whole of our salvation. The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the church at Corinth says this in 1 Corinthians 13:11-12: *“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”* The “then” is when Christ returns or we go to meet him in glory.

Then, two weeks ago we began to see Peter's exhortation to Christian living as a result of all that he has just told them. He tells to prepare their minds for battle, because they are truly in a war – a spiritual war.

Remember, he tells them at the end of this chapter in 1 Peter 5:8: *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”*

Again, also remember the exhortation of Paul to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 6:10-14: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of*

*wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

With this, there is then the call to be obedient to God in light of the return of Christ and an exhortation to holiness. As we read in 1 Peter 1:15-16: *“but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”*

He continues this exhortation today, but in doing so he gives the foundation reason as to why we should be holy. Turn with me to 1 Peter 1:17-21 (READ).

In verse 17, he tells them that if they are Christians then they have to remember a few things – if they can truly call God Father – and remember, it is only Christians can do so. What do we, as Christians, pray ... *“Our Father who art in heaven ...”* It is a fact – only the Christian can call God “Father”!

Peter is saying, that if you can truly call God “Father” you need to remember that he is the one who is the judge of all that we do. We know that our salvation is not based on what we do. It is not based on actions or our inactions – no, our salvation is a free gift from God.

However, we also know that once we have trusted in Christ as Savior and Lord, then we need to live and act in a certain way – a way that is in accord with all that God has revealed in His word.

If God says something is wrong, then we shouldn’t do ... if He says we should be doing something, then we better be doing it. Why, because He will judge us according to our works in order to determine our crowns in heaven.

James 1:12 says: *“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”* And later in this first letter of Peter, he says in 1 Peter 5:4: *“and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”* (The crowns are based on what we as Christians do or do not do here on earth – but that is a subject for another time.)

The Apostle Paul, in his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy says this: 2 Timothy 4:1: *“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:”*

He is saying, that as a result of the fact that God will judge your works, he says then: *“conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;...”* We must note here that this is not the kind of fear, as if someone was holding gun to your head – but rather a sense of awe considering the majesty and holiness of God.

In other words, as we consider who God is and what He has done for us it should motivate us to be obedient to Him ... to do what He has commanded and revealed in His Word, and to not do that which He has told us is displeasing to Him.

I firmly believe that one of the problems in the world today is that those who call themselves Christians do not recognize or believe in the awesomeness of God. They believe that He is just the guy upstairs and that God is love. There is no holy fear of God and there needs to be. Just consider what Peter says next.

In his further encouragement to live a holy life and live a life in awe of what God has done, consider what Peter says next: 1 Peter 1:18,19: *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*

He reminds them of what God has done for them through the Lord Jesus Christ. They were redeemed – that is, those pilgrims of the dispersion AND US — not with corruptible things, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ – as a lamb without blemish and without spot.

To be redeemed means to be bought with a price. If anyone has ever taken anything to a pawn shop, they know what I mean. You take something there initially because you need some money, and then when you have money, you go to buy back what was once yours – you try to redeem it – to buy it for a price.

The Bible tells us that there is a price for our sins – we have to pay for them. And that punishment is death – eternal death, separated from God and the glories of heaven. However, as Christians we believe that Christ has paid the penalty for our sins. But he didn’t pay it with good works, he didn’t pay it with money — he paid it with his own blood on the cross at Calvary.

And it was God who sent His son into the world to die and to shed his blood for the sins of those who would believe in him.

We must remember, that after Adam’s sin, God set up a series of sacrifices so that His people could have forgiveness of their sins. But we know, as we compare Scripture with Scripture, that these sacrifices all looked forward to the one final and perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

We are reminded this in the book of Hebrews. For example we read in Hebrews 10:1-4: *“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”*

And so we are reminded to be obedient to God and to live in holy fear because of what He has done — He has sent Jesus to die for OUR sins.

As we go on, we see that Peter emphasizes that all that we believe has its root in the plan of God that was made before the foundation of the world. As we read in 1 Peter 1:20-21: *“He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”*

Our faith and our hope is what God has done – He sent Christ, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity to die for our sins and therefore we are to be obedient, which means to live a life of holiness, the best we can.

As Christians, God has given us everything – we have forgiveness of sins, heaven is waiting for us, we have the privilege of worship and prayer, we have the Holy Spirit and the multitude of the other blessings of our salvation – but we must never, never, never forget what it cost – the death of Jesus Christ on the cross at

Calvary, who shed his blood for us and our salvation. We must remember the words always of Peter: *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”*