

I PETER I:3-12

Toby Sumpter

Trinity Reformed Church - Moscow, ID

A.D. September 27, 2009

OPENING PRAYER: Gracious Father, we thank you for your Word, for our Lord Jesus, and for the promise of the Spirit to empower these words. Speak to us now, challenge us, change us, grow us up, and comfort us that we might be your people. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

INTRODUCTION

We noted last week that Peter is writing to Christians in Asia Minor who have been scattered to their places, chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, lead by the sanctifying Spirit, in order to be the covenant people of God in the Son (1:2).

BEGOTTEN AGAIN

Continuing the Trinitarian theme, following the greeting, Peter launches into a Trinitarian “berekah” – the traditional Jewish blessing-prayer which continues through verse 12. The theme of the prayer is a new and lasting life through the mercy of God the Father in the resurrection of Jesus, revealed through the Holy Spirit. This means that we have been granted the status of the Son (1:3). Specifically, Peter says that we were “begotten again” in the resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus was “born again,” we were born again (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14-17, Col. 2:20, 3:3).

SALVATION INHERITANCE

Frequently, popular misconceptions cloud out our ability to read Peter carefully. This salvation-inheritance is not “going to heaven when you die.” This truncated gospel misplaces what salvation is all about. Salvation is nothing less than the renewal of all creation (2 Cor. 5:17, Gal. 6:15, Rev. 21:5). Peter says this inheritance is guarded in heaven (1:4) and ready to be “revealed in the last time” (1:5). We should note here that Peter later says that Jesus was manifested in the “last times” (1:20). So the “last time” begins with the incarnation. This “faith unto salvation” will be tested and revealed as “praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:7), and this is why they rejoice, believing that they are receiving this salvation (1:8-9). It was this “salvation” that the prophets searched after, and the Spirit of Christ testified to them concerning. What is this salvation inheritance? It is Christ’s sufferings and glory (1:10-11). And it is this gospel that has been preached which even the angels longed to look into (1:12, cf. Ps. 8, Heb. 1). Our salvation is the revelation of the sufferings and glory of Jesus. It is that inheritance which now belongs to us, and it is guarded in heaven by Jesus. This is why it cannot fade away. It is as indestructible as Jesus is. And it was revealed in Jesus’ first advent, it is revealed when He acts in history to deliver His people, and it will be revealed at the end of all things, at the resurrection.

MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD

This faith unto salvation is “more precious than gold that perishes” (1:7), and its genuineness is confirmed by a long history of looking forward to this salvation through the work of the Holy Spirit (1:9-12). This “praise, honor, and glory” was prefigured in the tabernacle and temple and kingdom of Israel. Gold and all kinds of precious metals covered those garden-palaces signifying a return to Eden, a new creation, a return to fellowship with God, and restoration of man’s place in the world. But those places of worship were only dim shadows of the reality of man being restored to fellowship with God and ruling the world in wisdom. Jesus is the reality because Jesus rules at the Father’s right hand.

CONCLUSION & APPLICATIONS

We should remember that this section is a hymn of praise. Worship is the foundation of Peter’s letter, and it is the foundation of our identity/salvation in the Father, Son, and Spirit. In worship we draw near to God, God draws near to us, and the world is reconciled in the Son through the Spirit. This is the new creation. We are the worshiping people of God, His new creation.

Last, believe the gospel that you have been begotten again to a living hope. You have been rescued from Egypt. You are kept by the power of God, and your salvation is as secure and glorious as Jesus at the right hand of the Father. And this new birth and living hope is for the world.

In the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen!

CLOSING PRAYER: O God, we praise you and worship you, we bless your name. You are good, you are merciful to pitiful sinners, slaves and beggars who are so often ungrateful for your salvation. And frequently we are ungrateful in our unbelief. You offer us grace, and we don't believe that you will really forgive us. You offer us salvation, and we aren't sure you really mean it or we fear that we will lose it or that you will turn your back on us. Grant us grace to look to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our father. And it's in His name that we pray, Amen.



Published by: Canon Press • P.O. Box 8729 • 205 E. 5th St. • Moscow, ID 83843
www.canonpress.com • orders@canonpress.com • 800-488-2034 • Fax 208-882-1568