

First Peter Chapter One

Supplemental Study Guide¹

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¹ Prepared by David Crowe for Pray's Mill Baptist Church Adult Sunday School

ALL Scripture Quotations are from the ESV Bible unless the Scripture reference is in a quote from another author – their original translation was kept.

I. Introduction (1:1-2)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

Peter opens his letter by introducing himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. A statement that would affirm his unique authority to write to the Church so as to provide encouragement, instruction, exhortation, and correction.

Peter was one of Jesus' twelve primary disciples and one of the three closest among the twelve, along with James and John. He was present for the full length of Jesus' public ministry and served as an eye witness from the time of Jesus' baptism through his resurrection and ascension.²

While among Jesus' closest disciples, he also served as a default spokesman and leader for the disciples during Jesus' public ministry and through the inauguration of the early Church and its Jewish foundations (serving as the primary Apostle to the Jews while Paul served as the primary Apostle to the Gentiles). "...When they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised (for he who worked through Peter for his apostolic ministry to the circumcised worked also through me for mine to the Gentiles)...."

Galatians 2:7-8 ESV

Because of Peter's distinct role in Christ's ministry and the establishment of the Church, it is fitting to highlight a select few references to him from the Gospels and Acts to better appreciate this unique man and his place in writing this precious letter.

Luke 6:14, When the apostles were listed in the gospels, Peter was always first.

Matthew 14:23-33, Peter was the only disciple that joined Jesus when walking upon the water.

Matthew 16:13-20, It was Peter that gave the good confession that Jesus was the Christ, and it was to Peter that Jesus said he would build his Church.

Matthew 17:1-8, Peter, James, and John were the only eyewitnesses to Jesus' glorious transfiguration on the mountain.

² Note that the Apostolic Office required being a witness from Jesus' baptism through this ascension as observed in the selection of Judas' replacement in Acts 1:21-22.

Matthew 26:36-46, Peter, James, and John were the three that Jesus specifically took aside to labor with him in prayer in the time of his great distress... and it was Peter that Jesus directly addresses when finding them asleep.

John 18:10, Peter drew his sword and immediately attempted to engage in mortal combat to defend Jesus against his unlawful arrest.

Luke 24:13, While there was initial doubting of the reports of Jesus' resurrection, Peter ran to the empty tomb and personally gazed at the evidence and left marveling.

John 21:15-19, Peter, who had dramatically and heartbreakingly denied Jesus during his trial, was precious and personally restored by the resurrected Jesus.

Acts 1:12-26, Peter assumed a clear leadership role among the approximately one hundred and twenty believers in Jerusalem in the time between Christ's ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit when Judas' replacement was selected.

Acts 2:14-41, Immediately after the sending of the Holy Spirit and the inauguration of the Church, Peter preached the Church's first sermon, and when he concluded approximately three thousand people came to saving faith in Christ.

Acts 4:1-22, Peter and John were the first two believers arrested and threatened on account of their preaching Christ crucified.

Acts 8:14-17, Peter and John were dispatched by the other apostles at Jerusalem to Samaria to see that upon believing the gospel that the Samaritans would receive the Holy Spirit too.

Acts 10, Peter served a unique leadership role in the expansion of the gospel to the Gentiles – breaking down the walls of hostility and preaching as the Holy Spirit came upon those who believed just as he had done among the Jews.

Acts 12:1-19, Peter was unjustly imprisoned and subsequently supernaturally set free.

Acts 15:7-11, Peter exhibited a clear leadership role in defense of Gentile conversion through faith in Christ alone during the all important Jerusalem Council.

As can be plainly observed, Peter was an extraordinarily consequential leader in the early Church, and a letter bearing his name would have garnered the attention and respect of its readers. Further, as stated in the letter's introduction, Peter was an Apostle of Jesus Christ. This office was not one that he pursued or secured by his own means or even through the affirmation of the other believers. The office of Apostle was a once in time office established by Jesus Christ for the establishment of his Church. It consisted of the men who were Jesus' closest disciples, often referenced as the twelve. The two notable exceptions being Judas' replacement (referenced above) and Paul. The Apostles were authoritative eye witnesses of the resurrected Jesus Christ, who also personally commissioned them for their work as the founding shepherds of this new body of believers consisting of Jews and Gentiles.

**To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus,
Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the
foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit,
for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:**

After identifying himself as the authoritative author, Peter speaks to those whom he is addressing/writing to: the elect exiles of the dispersion.

The regions that the recipients were identified with were: Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia

Three of these regions (Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia) were directly referenced as having persons present in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers at Pentecost. It is unknown how many of the approximately three thousand people that came to faith were from the various regions represented, but there is a high likelihood that some came to faith from these areas and returned home as new believers either immediately thereafter or when dispersed through the persecution that followed Stephen's martyrdom.

All five of these referenced locations were Roman provinces and are a testament of how God was pleased to sovereignly use the idolatrous Roman Empire in such a pervasive way – from the incarnate ministry of Christ, through the foundation of the Church, and into the rapid expansion of the gospel testimony to numerous peoples throughout the empire and beyond.

The letter's recipients from these various regions were all identified as the elect, and it appears that this is their greater connection. It was not the Roman Empire, but their common election in Christ that bound these persons from these various regions together. Further, it is God's election in Christ that ultimately binds the larger church too – unifying persons from throughout regions, kingdoms, nations, and continents as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Peter qualifies by what means these recipients were elect or chosen in Christ: according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. These recipients' redemption in Christ was according to God's good pleasure to redeem a people for himself through the atoning work of the Son and the effectual drawing of them in faith by the Spirit. This was not God acting on what he foresaw, but God acting on what he foreordained.

Elect Exiles

Peter has also referenced the recipients as exiles. Therefore, it needs to be discerned if he was speaking to them as a people who were literally put out from somewhere or if this was a reference to their present sojourning in an antagonistic world.

1 Peter 2:11 appears to support the conclusion that this is a reference to being strangers in this world... a people longing for a better homeland... an eternal one. Also, we observe in Hebrews 11 the term exiles is used to express the believer's experience of being pilgrims in this world – a displaced people in a temporal condition.

Now we also note at this time, by the very nature of the use of "exiles" and "dispersion," there is a particularly heavy Jewish emphasis here - the Jews having endured the dispersion when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were conquered, and in some measure many continued living as exiles.

"These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city." Hebrews 11:13-16 ESV

Paul expresses a like statement in Philippians 3.

“But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.”

Philippians 3:20-21 ESV

Further, Peter’s other use of exiles when referring to his readers in chapter two supports the conclusion that this is a dispersion and displacement that exceeds matters of lands and borders. There is a conduct befitting those in Christ that must be maintained, and it is a conduct that has a view to a home beyond this natural world. Therefore, it is not only the original readers/recipients of Peter’s letter that were elect exiles, but all who are in Christ. Though the original readers/recipients were physically dispersed among the identified Roman provinces, so too the Church is dispersed among almost all lands and awaits its call home.

The aforementioned foreknowledge of God the Father is further unpacked with a clear Trinitarian expression of salvation.

God the Father

It was the foreknowledge of God the Father, or the effectual calling of God by his own choice in eternity past, as foreknowledge is a term communicating something that has been determined by God at a prior time, something that has been foreordained. A plain articulation of this is found in Acts 2:23, “...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”

Therefore, we conclude that foreknowledge is an expression of God’s sovereign plan and working, it is his Lordship over the work and sweep of redemption. It is not that God has come to know something in an observational or predictive fashion, but that he has intimate knowledge of that which he has decreed, and his decreeing a matter to come to pass is as good as the action’s completion.

God the Spirit

The sanctification of the Spirit is an articulation of the progressive application of the conforming work of the Savior by the ongoing work of the Spirit/Helper. The sanctifying work of the Spirit is the setting of these believers apart for God's work.³

God the Son

When addressing the Son there are two major elements addressed: obedience to the Son and the Son's mediatorial sacrifice.

Regarding the element of obedience: The whole of the Scriptures, Old and New Testament, are clear that justification is secured by faith alone. There are no meritorious works that secure salvation, be it the Law of Moses or anything else. However, the Scriptures are also clear, even when there is not a condition on the covenant (such as was the case with the Mosaic Law), that we as a people who are born again are to walk in obedience. Being redeemed and born again, we are now able and fully expected to walk in obedience. Obedience to the Son is a definitive result and reflection of one's ongoing sanctification.

Sprinkling With Blood

Sprinkling with blood is a magnificent image that further articulates the work of the Son. Blood sprinkling was part of the Old Testament sacrificial system of worship, but blood sprinkling on the corporate people of God was only applied at the inauguration of the Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 24:8).⁴ There were, however, two other times that blood would be sprinkled on individuals – when Aaron and his sons were set apart as priests (Exodus 29:21), and when someone was confirmed healed/cleansed from a leprous disease (Leviticus 14:7).

The only other sprinkling of blood in a New Covenant context that is referenced in the New Testament outside of Peter's introduction is in Hebrews 10 and 12.

³ The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament; John Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; 1 Peter: Roger M. Raymer; David C Cook, 1983; (Hereafter: Cook), Pg.840

⁴ Cook, Pg.840

"Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Hebrews 10:19-22

The sprinkling of Jesus' blood provides confidence to enter the holy places.

The sprinkling of Jesus' blood provides the opportunity of drawing near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

The sprinkling of Jesus' blood provides hearts that are made clean from an evil conscience.

"But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." Hebrews 12:22-24 ESV

Abel's blood was a temporal expression of sacrificial worship, but Christ's blood was perfectly superior and the means of ratifying the new covenant.

The matter is whether the sprinkling of blood here is alluding to the corporate or personal image from the Old Testament. Wayne Grudem persuasively argues for the personal application and cites David's allusion to the Levitical text in Psalm 51 where we find his prayer seeking restoration and forgiveness for his egregious offenses against God. There David states, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm 51:7 David was clearly not petitioning to be restored from a leprous disease, but recognizes that his offense has broken fellowship with God, it has effectively spiritually put him out of the camp and separated him as the leper's disease compelled his own separation until he was healed, sprinkled with blood, and declared clean. In like manner the believer is not outside of Christ once justified, but his relationship is pocked by sin in this temporal life and is in need of cleansing.

Edmund Clowney and Thomas Schreiner both argue that these are all one-time actions associated with conversion: setting apart by the Spirit, obedience of responding in faith and repentance, and the effectual application of the blood of the covenant as a people of God.⁵ However, because of the natural pattern expressed throughout the New Testament of these being progressive elements of salvation (justification followed by continued obedience through sanctification and constant refinement until the work is completed) and because of the preferred conclusion regarding the “sprinkling with his blood,” it is concluded that these are not likely all a one-time actions.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

The immediate introduction concludes with a familiar salutation of grace and peace. These two words are magnificent expressions of the love and glory of God applied toward his Church. While peace or “shalom” was and continues to be a common expression of greeting and departure among the Jewish people, it has here been coupled with the Church’s rich understanding that they have experienced the greatest peace through God’s grace in Christ.

These two words were frequently paired in the New Testament epistles and were foundational reminders that would set the tone of their letters.

“To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 1:3 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:2 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ....” Galatians 1:3 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 1:2 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philippians 1:2 ESV

⁵ The Bible Speaks Today: The Message of 1 Peter; Edmund Clowney; Inter Varsity Press, 1988; (Hereafter: Clowney), Pg.35
The New American Commentary: 1,2 Peter, Jude; Thomas R. Schreiner; Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003; (Hereafter: Schreiner), Pgs.55-56

“To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.”

Colossians 1:2 ESV

“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace.” 1 Thessalonians 1:1

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thessalonians 1:2 ESV

“To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

1 Timothy 1:2 ESV

“To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.”

2 Timothy 1:2 ESV

“To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.”

Titus 1:4 ESV

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Philemon 3 ESV

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

1 Peter 1:1-2 ESV

“May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.” 2 Peter 1:2 ESV

“Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Father’s Son, in truth and love.” 2 John 3 ESV

“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.” Revelation 1:4-5 ESV

The consistency of this pattern, pairing grace and peace, should never be seen as a formulaic element that simply made for a nice introduction to get a letter started. These were and are expressions of magnificent truths for those in Christ. The Apostles were intentional with their word choices and this proves to be no exception. Further, Peter breaks from the common pairing of these two words and expresses them in the form of a blessing, petitioning God on his reader’s behalf that they might know these precious realities in abundance.

Peter filled his greeting with great theological density to accurately communicate his and the recipients' relationship and common hope.

These churches consisted of blended congregations of both Jews and Gentiles, and in the letter's introduction there has already been an expression of the freshness of the New Covenant's uniting of these various persons in Christ. Therefore, it was quite fitting that Peter, who was a consequential leader in the unfolding of the Church's identity as Jew and Gentile – one people in Christ – was laying the opening foundation of his letter by identifying this united people as God's elect, a distinguishment that had previously been reserved for Israel, but now incorporated this body known as the Church.⁶

Reflection and Application

Peter will draw from both his experience and authority throughout this letter, and he establishes his credibility in both areas by identifying himself as an Apostle of Jesus Christ. What are your understandings of the Apostolic Office, and why was it important with the establishing of the foundation of the Church and for the contemporary Church to recognize that there no longer remains any "Apostles"?

⁶ Cook, Pg.839

Peter writes to a people whom he describes as resident aliens, definitively in the world, but not of the world – those who cannot wholly associate with the world, but must negotiate its daily realities and at times operate distinct from its normal patterns (such as is observed in 1 Corinthians 5-6 when it comes to discipline and righting wrongs by others). Peter makes it plain that there is no *full assimilation* to this temporal home. Think about how this looks in your pattern of life and experience and write out five examples of your own life patterns and experience in this world being different because you are a sojourner longing for your eternal home.

- 1) _____

- 2) _____

- 3) _____

- 4) _____

- 5) _____

We affirm that the Scriptures clearly teach a Triune God (One God in Three Persons). In this chapter that unpacks the believer’s glorious salvation in Christ, we observe various roles that the Three Persons of the Trinity execute in the believer’s salvation. Consider how this should impact your understanding of salvation and consequently your worship.

Peter included a well established element of greeting at the end of the introduction of his letter. It was stated that the inclusion of “Grace and Peace” was not simply formulaic, but a precious expression of God’s truth as applied to his redeemed children. Seventeen examples from the New Testament Epistles were provided where this introduction was applied. Take some time to read over the introductions associated with these examples and write out some reflections of the impact and value of such a familiar, but valuable introductory element.

II. Further articulation of their common salvation:

God the Father has caused the beloved to be born again (1:3-5)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We will first look at this unit as a whole before examining some of the elements of the passage more closely.

Having already highlighted their common salvation rooted in the Trinitarian work of God in his greeting, Peter goes on to reiterate the glory of their salvation as a baseline for that which will follow, a foundation for his letter that places significant emphasis on suffering: Christ's suffering, the believers' suffering, and then Christ's glory and the believer's shared glory in Christ.... All rooted in this magnificent salvation

Peter began with a worshipful adoration of God who he identified as "blessed" or uniquely praiseworthy.

"Blessed" εὐλογητός

Note that this term's eight usages are consistently applied to affirming God's praiseworthy quality - an identifying character element of God even by the unbelieving high priest when Jesus stood before him on trial!

"But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?' " Mark 14:61 ESV

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people...." Luke 1:68 ESV

"...because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen." Romans 1:25 ESV

"To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen." Romans 9:5 ESV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort...."
2 Corinthians 1:3 ESV

"The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying."
2 Corinthians 11:31 ESV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...." Ephesians 1:3 ESV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!" 1 Peter 1:3 ESV

God the Father

Peter distinguishes God the Father (whom the Son glorifies) as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ⁷ – he then goes on to unpack the Father's role in the salvation of the elect exiles:

He acted in his own great mercy toward the believers (clearly not responding to a qualitative element possessed by the beneficiary).

He has caused the believers to be born again to a living hope, through the resurrection, and to an inheritance. This was plainly an independent work of God, not an interdependent work between man and God, but wholly an independent work of God.

To a living hope.

A vibrant and active expectation of sure fulfillment of that which has been promised through the Scriptures – a life transforming confidence in God.

Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

⁷ Note that in Romans 9:5, Paul demonstrates the equal identification with the Son also identified as "God over all, blessed forever."

Note that this reflects the clear and absolute necessity of the resurrection. Even when Jesus was expositing Ezekiel 36 for Nicodemus, his resurrection was absolutely necessary for one to be born again and thereby see the Kingdom of God - further affirmation of the mysterious and unthwartable providence of God.

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." Romans 8:11 ESV

To an inheritance.

This is an obvious benefit to being born again, born into the family of God.

This is the fleshing out of "a living hope" - the inheritance provided by God.

An inheritance that is imperishable.

An inheritance that is undefiled.

An inheritance that is unfading.

An inheritance that is kept in heaven for the believer.

There is no internal, external, natural, or supernatural threat to this inheritance.

This is an inheritance unto eternal glory.

This is an inheritance that is provided to those (elect exiles) who by God's power are being guarded/protected through faith and for salvation.

Through faith.

When God's power is protecting one's future salvation through faith, this means this salvation is made continually sure/secured on account of faith and that this faith will endure as it is kept by the power of God.

For a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time.

This appears to be an eschatological reference to the future revelation and glorification of the dead in Christ and the live in Christ being snatched up - both groups immediately transformed in glorious preparation for the eternal state.

Indisputably the greatest revelation to come is that of Jesus himself, and then accompanying him, his pure spotless bride that he has prepared and worked his redeeming, sanctifying, and ultimately glorifying work within.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a
living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Peter expresses that we are born again to a living hope that is sure because of the living Christ – as sure is the resurrection so is the surety of the born again believer's hope.

Mercy

Being born again is only possible because of the mercy of God, but thankfully mercy is a definitive element of God's revealed character: Mercy superseded the rigorous demands of the Law and always has, but in Jesus' incarnate ministry he brought this matter to the immediate forefront.

"Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Matthew 9:13 ESV

"And if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless." Matthew 12:7 ESV

In Luke 1 we see the prevalence of mercy in God's redemption of his people through the prophetic declaration made over John the Baptist who would go on to serve as the forerunner and heart-preparer of Jesus the Messiah.

"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1:76-79 ESV

Advancing through the New Testament, we observe that the very identification of the elect in Paul's illustration in Romans 9 was that they are *vessels of mercy*.

"What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?" Romans 9:22-24 ESV

Paul is absolutely clear of mercy's role in salvation and he frames it in direct contrast with our former failed condition:

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved...." Ephesians 2:4-5 ESV

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit...." Titus 3:4-5 ESV

Hope

Hope: confident expectation, particularly in the promises and assurances of God even when they are not presently seen or experienced. Being born again includes being introduced to a sure and perfect hope rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Paul highlights some elements of this hope in his letter to Titus.

Paul expresses the believer's hope as being a sure word from the God who never lies and who established this promise of eternal life for his elect before time itself.

"...in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began and at the proper time manifested in his word through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior...." Titus 1:2-3 ESV

Paul roots the believer's hope in Christ's redemption and glorious return.

"...waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." Titus 2:13-14 ESV

"...so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:7 ESV

Demonstrations of how hope comes through the resurrection:

Through his resurrection, Jesus was declared/affirmed to be the Son of God in power - absolutely necessary for reconciliation and future glory for those who have put their faith in him.

"...was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord...." Romans 1:4 ESV

Through his resurrection, Jesus has provided the means of being identified, not only with him in death, but also in resurrected and eternal life.

"For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." Romans 6:5 ESV

"The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven." 1 Corinthians 15:47-49 ESV

Through Christ's resurrection, the dead in Christ will rise and reign with him through his Millennial Reign.

"Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years." Revelation 20:6 ESV

**to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded
through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

Peter states that this imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance is kept in heaven, or God's abode, where it is secure and sure until the time of its fulfillment.

We commonly think of salvation in a looking back capacity - the redemption accomplished in Christ applied to the believer at the moment of genuine faith and repentance (secured in eternity past and applied in time and space at conversion). However, there is also a clear future component to salvation in which the work of progressive sanctification and conforming to the image of the Son of God will be completed. This future salvation is when the mortal/temporal will be set aside and the immortal/eternal is taken on at the resurrection, when the spirit is reunited with a body fit to be in the forever presence of God. This is what Peter was pressing his readers to rightfully anticipate and long for in the present time.

Paul also expressed this to the Thessalonians, with their own present struggles he directs their gaze ahead:

"For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him." 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 ESV

With this salvation is glory that is yet to be revealed or experienced. Paul speaks to this in a context of suffering.

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Romans 8:18 ESV

It is important to recognize too that, just as the inheritance is enduring and sure, so also is the believer's obtaining it as we are being guarded (actively protected) through faith for our future inheritance and participation in Christ's glory.⁸

⁸ Clowney, Pg.49

Final Reflections On 1:3-5

Very rapidly Peter begins laying the foundation for one's identity in Christ - fostering a strong focus on an eternal perspective and God's means of accomplishing the promises in which one's hopes are centered.

God's means supplied through the resurrection and to a guaranteed inheritance.

God's means supplied through faith and to a future salvation.

Reflection and Application

Affirming that God is "blessed" or praiseworthy can become an element of common knowledge that produces little to no effect in the life of a believer – that is a tragedy and dishonoring to the Lord. How does an affirmation of God being "blessed" impact your thinking, praying, worship, and daily actions?

We have already considered some basic elements of the Triune God's work of salvation and here Peter is further unpacking God the Father's work in redeeming a believer. Five prepositions set apart distinguishing elements that all deserve attention. To a living hope, Through the resurrection, To an inheritance, Through faith, For a salvation. Select one of these elements* and provide further reflections on how they inform your understanding of salvation and the impact that has on your thinking, praying, worship, and daily actions.

**Please do not select "Through Faith" as this will be more completely addressed in the next point of reflection and application.*

"When God's power is protecting one's future salvation through faith, this means that this salvation is made continually sure/secured on account of faith and that this faith will endure as it is kept by the power of God." How does examining other demonstrations of God's power provide assurance of God's power to guard the believer through to the full expression of their future salvation (glorification)? Examine the following statements and accompanying verses to see the subject of the power of God further developed and write out your reflections and points of personal application.

The power of God is demonstrated in resurrection.

"But Jesus answered them, 'You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God.'"
Matthew 22:29 ESV

The power of God as observed in the immaculate conception.

"And the angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.'" Luke 1:35 ESV

The miraculous works of Jesus were demonstrations of the power of God.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know....” Acts 2:22 ESV

The gospel is the power of God for salvation.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” Romans 1:16 ESV

The power of the Spirit of God enabled Paul to execute faithful ministry.

“...by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ....” Romans 15:19 ESV

The word of the cross is the power of God.

“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:18 ESV

Future resurrection is wholly by the power of God.

“And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.” 1 Corinthians 6:14 ESV

The power of God demonstrated in Christ’s resurrection and the apostles’ service.

“For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.” 2 Corinthians 13:4 ESV

The power of God providing endurance in suffering for the gospel.

“Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God....” 2 Timothy 1:8 ESV

Believers are to have a view to the future now. This has been the pattern throughout Redemptive History – always pressing forward to the perfect fulfillment of God’s perfect plan for his own glory and the full restoration and joy of his elect. Do you have a view to the future or have you been persuaded of the fallacy of “being so heavenly minded that one is no earthly good”? How might Peter’s letter help you better cultivate a view to the future of God’s redemptive work in you and the larger church?

III. Present suffering yielding to future glory (1:6-7)

**In this you rejoice, though now for a little while,
if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,**

"In this" is referring immediately back to the living hope of 1:3 that was unpacked from 1:3-5.

Therefore, this is one of the most reasonable and pure elements to rejoice in because it is a sure and fixed hope.

"Though now" appears to be connecting back to the immediate time in which the believers were living and striving to walk in faithful obedience, while the elements of "in this" are looking to that which is to come, as hope is anticipating that which is not presently seen or experienced.

"In this you rejoice."

This = a living hope secured in the resurrection, a perfect inheritance secured by God's power, and the future culmination of their salvation.

"Though now... you have been grieved."

Now = the temporal experience of this natural life that is filled with testing, suffering, and trials.

The present in *no way* reduces the rejoicing that is rooted in the future, and Peter will articulate this by demonstrating how present struggles provide the fertile ground of future glory.

Peter was communicating that it is in view of eternity that one's present struggles are but for a little while or a very short time.

Various Trials

Various expressions of testing and trials will always be part of the believer's experience in this natural/temporal life because they are a means of conforming the elect to Christ and they are a testimony of the hatred this world has toward Christ and therefore anyone who bears his name.

James exhorts his readers to “count it all joy” when they experience various expressions of testing and trial because such things are subordinate to a greater good... to fulfillment of God’s purposes in the life of his children.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” James 1:2-4 ESV

Consider the esteemed characters of Hebrews 11, their tested faith proved its genuineness and it was to the praise of God who so enabled and kept them.

So, again, there may be a necessity for temporal suffering, temporal trial, and seasons of testing as they are all working to conform the faithful to Christ and bringing due glory to the Father who is sufficient, who is good, and whose hope is sure amidst such times.

Further, recall what has been clearly established in 1 Peter 1:5, that God keeps his own through faith. Therefore, the testing of the faith is as much a testimony to the one exercising faith as it to God's power in keeping that faith resilient through testing/trial.

Questions that might arise from these various trials that produce grief:

What would qualify as a trial?

The qualifier of "various" would appear to speak of the comprehensive breadth of the trials - of differing natures and degrees. An element of this is that trouble serves various purposes and comes in various forms.⁹ However, even when trials and testing are expressed and experienced in innumerable ways the principles, precepts, and truths of the Scripture remain the same.

What does it mean to be grieved by a trial or trials, and how is that reconciled with rejoicing?

⁹ The MacArthur Study Bible, NKJV. Word Bibles, 1997. (Hereafter: MacArthur), Pg.1940

Until the institution of the New Heavens and the New Earth there will be the presence of sin and its comprehensive impact and influence. Therefore, there will be the presence of grief over and because of sin in various measures. Until the old man is fully set aside there will inevitably be measures of grief and sorrow that mark our progress, and until the presence of sin is abolished there will be grief and sorrow over a world that despises our Lord. So, in various measures “grief” and “rejoicing” will co-exists for now.

This mingling of grief and joy is perhaps most tangibly experienced when a believer dies. There is genuine grief and loss that has occurred... there is mourning and rightfully so at that time. However, there is also rejoicing too, not in the loss, but in the believer’s entering into their rest and the joy of their master.

So, Peter is calling us to maintain a proper perspective on the enduring nature of our inheritance, which is contrasted with the temporal nature of our suffering.

What Peter will go on to further unpack in what is to follow Paul spoke of in Romans 8.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18 ESV

**so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious
than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result
in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

"So that..." Peter goes on to express that the reason for the rejoicing (in the glorious salvation previously unpacked) is that their tested faith may result in:

Praise at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Praise, glory, and honor of the Lord who is the source, object, and sustainer of the believer's tested faith. This is affirmed by the fact that this exultation is said to be at the revelation of Jesus Christ... and we have an account of the future revelation of Jesus Christ and the praise and the glory present at that time, that while associated with the believer's testimony, are wholly expressed to the Lord.

"...when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed." 2 Thessalonians 1:10. ESV

Note now, the rich descriptive language of Peter... "more precious..." Peter is esteeming one's tested faith above natural riches and beauty.

It is of greater value (more precious).

It is of greater endurance (does not perish).

These various trials demonstrate the genuineness of one's faith by the believer enduring them well and demonstrating Christ's sufficiency amidst struggle, hardship, and trial.

Peter is plainly stating that the various trials that are presently grieving the believer are a means of testing the genuineness of their faith, putting its superior value on display and ultimately bringing the Redeemer glory. Further, it is clear that genuine faith will endure such times, itself belonging to persons "who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1:5)

Finally, we have a view of this future exultation of God expressed through those whose faith has endured and produced righteous deeds.

"Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure'— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints." Revelation 19:6-8 ESV

Reflection and Application

Peter makes it plain that a believer's relationship with suffering is quite different than just that which accompanies living in a fallen world. The believer suffers with a view to their sure and fixed hope in God's powerfully keeping them and also with the knowledge that their personal suffering is yielding an eternal good by exercising and strengthening their faith. Therefore, suffering for those in Christ is framed with the mingling of joy and grief with the recognition that enduring joy triumphs over the temporal grief. In view of this, how do you speak truth to yourself amidst suffering/trial, and what is the central core of your counsel to other believers in their own varied experiences of suffering/trial?

[illegible]

IV. Confident faith in that which is unseen and yet will be seen (1:8-9)

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

The Apostle Peter obviously saw, and had, first hand experienced the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, but it appears that his readers did not enjoy this privilege themselves, but like us are beneficiaries of Peter's testimony.

This further affirms the unique value of the apostolic testimony of Jesus' baptism, public ministry, death, burial and resurrection.

"So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." Acts 1:21-22 ESV

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:1-3 ESV

While the letter's recipients were present during the approximate time that Jesus was carrying out his public ministry, it is likely they were a significant distance away from where Jesus was ministering (having been described in the introduction as a people scattered throughout Asia Minor). Further, those among them who were Gentiles would not have been a primary element of Jesus' public ministry, which focused on the lost sheep of the house of Israel. However, whatever their prior context they have heard and believed the gospel. They have now submitted their lives to the Lord in faith and repentance and are faithful members of Christ's Church scattered throughout the known world and continuing to expand to new regions. And most importantly... though these believers have not seen Jesus, they love him. It was not witnessing the mighty works of God that produces faith and salvation – plenty had that and blasphemously rejected it. Rather, it is the Spirit of God working in the hearts of men to produce faith and salvation and, consequently, an affection for their Lord whom they have not yet beheld with their eyes.

When will these believers see him? They will behold their Lord with their very eyes when the trumpet blows and the dead in Christ are called up to join him in the air.... Job himself even affirms that resurrected bodies will have eyes that will see their Redeemer.

“For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” 1 Thessalonians 4:15-16 ESV

“For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!” Job 19:25-27 ESV

There was a special qualitative nature to their loving Jesus while never having had direct personal interaction with him, and that is only possible because he is alive and present. Consider this by way of contrast with someone who is not alive.

When a parent is speaking to their child of a beloved great-grandparent that has passed and they are sharing with their child that they have confidence that the child would have loved and adored their great-grandparent, this parent is speaking on general deductions. The fact is the child can now love the memories shared by others of this great-grandparent, but they do not have the actual capacity to personally love that great-grandparent as they were gone before the child's birth, and the child never had or will have contact with them in this life.

These believers never saw Jesus, but they have loved him because they know him who was and is alive. Their great God and Redeemer lives and, though not yet having beheld him with their eyes, they love him, and so do all who are in Christ, even two thousand years after his public ministry concluded.

Peter continues to build/affirm their faith rich relationship with the Lord Jesus: they presently do not see him and yet they believe in him. Personal proofs were not required to submit themselves in faith. Seeing was not believing here; rather, they are not seeing, but believing, and in this they are blessed.

“Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’” John 20:28-29 ESV

So, by what means are they believing in Jesus? Through the testimony of the Scriptures and the Apostles.

Not having personally seen Jesus they love him, believe in him, and rejoice in him.

This rejoicing is rooted in the work of the Spirit of God in their lives. They are rejoicing in their great God with enthusiastic delight – not simply cognitive affirmation, but inexpressible joy! They are a people being conditioned for suffering, but are erupting with joy because of that which supersedes anything that suffering can touch or mar.

This immediately recalls what was just established in 1:6, “In this you rejoice....” In this... that, “According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” 1 Peter 1:3-5 ESV

If there is a restraining or a lack of inexpressible and glorious rejoicing for those in Christ, then it is not a matter of lacking reason (even amidst circumstances), but a lack of genuine understanding of the completed and sure work of Christ. Pining to see with your eyes now what God promises later is a displeasing lack of faith in God’s sure word that there is a superior inheritance that cannot be challenged, as it is maintained by his glorious power.

obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The result/fruit of this belief, which manifests itself with great joy, is their salvation.

Their salvation was contingent on their faith in Jesus Christ whom they loved and believed in though they had not and did not see him. This is salvation from the just penalty of sin - putting one in right relationship with God and the capacity to be transformed into the likeness of the Redeemer and in due time made fit for eternity.

This was true for the dispersed believers throughout Asia Minor and it continues to be true of believers throughout the world.

Reflection and Application

Peter had the magnificent privilege of being an immediate witness to Jesus' baptism, public ministry, death, burial, and resurrection. His readers did not have this experience and neither have we. What is the value of Peter having been an eye witness and what is the nature of our situation that we are relying on now ancient accounts recorded by people we have never personally known? Should we have any less of an affection for Jesus? Please explain.

React with the well-known statement, "Distance makes the heart grow fonder." Is that true of one's relationship with Jesus, or is it even proper to say that there is distance because of his personal proximity to you? Further, as you work through this, consider both the role of the Holy Spirit and the assured resurrection.

Suffering's presence in this letter is quite clear, and yet Peter states that these believers were rejoicing in Jesus, whom they had not seen, with joy that was inexpressible and filled with glory. In view of these truths it was stated: If there is a restraining or a lack of inexpressible and glorious rejoicing for those in Christ, then it is not a matter of lacking reason (even amidst circumstances), but a lack of genuine understanding of the completed and sure work of Christ. Pining to see with your eyes *now* what God promises *later* is a displeasing lack of faith in God's sure word that there is a superior inheritance that cannot be challenged, as it is maintained by his glorious power.

Take some time to think on these matters and self-examine your disposition of joy or lack thereof. Write out your reflections and, if necessary, how you might need to repent of a "restraining or lacking of inexpressible joy."

V. Further development of the believer's salvation in Christ – anticipated by the Old Testament Saints and experienced by the New Testament Believers (1:10-12)

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

When Peter references salvation here, it is at the minimal with a view to 1:8-9, but more likely he is speaking to the whole of 1:3-9, which overtly addresses their common salvation. Further, he is framing their experience in a fascinating crossroads of pre-cross believers and post-cross believers (the Apostles and few others being the only ones that bridged these groups).

Here, 1:10-12, is the reference to pre-cross believers and before, 1:8-9, was the reference to post-cross believers - neither group having seen the Lord that they have loved and in whom they have believed.

These pre-cross believers searched and inquired carefully - having sufficient illumination by the Spirit of God to know:

The Christ was in time and space: personal and coming in time (1:11).

The Christ was going to suffer (1:11).

The Christ was going to be glorified (1:11).

When Peter references the grace that his readers have uniquely received it may be that he was expressing that there is a greater/unique grace in knowing the full scope of God's plan having unfolded through the Son of Man. This is something that the prophets would have longed to know, but clearly would not in their natural lives (as they were serving those who would follow, 1:12).

This appears to fit with the further development of the statement that addresses, "what person and what time." Also, this would be consistent with Simeon's context in which one who so longed to see these things had his desire most preciously satisfied.

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 'Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.' And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.'" Luke 2:25-35 ESV

By what means did they search and carefully inquire? By searching the Scriptures and praying. There was not a mystical formula to discerning the things of God for them and neither is there for the Church today.

Their inquiries in the Old Testament about the things of Christ further validates the sufficient testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, but also makes plain that, even while sufficient, there was still mystery yet to be fully unveiled.

While a rebuke, it still serves to make the point established here: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me...."

John 5:39 ESV

While various lines of inquiry could be explored about what they knew, what exactly they were searching for, could they have a precise idea of timing or location, etc., what is plain is that they were seeking to know the time and circumstances of the Christ, not necessarily who beyond the generally known criteria.¹⁰

¹⁰ NET Bible, Note 25

Though it does appear that the Lord made clear to these prophets what plainly (and literally) came to pass and will yet be in the future, as they seem to have understood that suffering would precede glory. This was something that Peter himself did not initially grasp.

"From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.'" Matthew 16:21-23 ESV

The cross was the plan of God - suffering before glory – and while Peter did not initially understand or appreciate this, he came to understand it with substantial and even personal clarity as he explicitly connects Christ's suffering and glory in his letter.

"And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:25-27 ESV

"...inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories." 1 Peter 1:11 ESV

"But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed." 1 Peter 4:13 ESV

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed...." 1 Peter 5:1 ESV

**It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves
but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through
those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent
from heaven, things into which angels long to look.**

Those who preceded them in the faith searched/inquired, and it was revealed to them that it was not theirs to have this insight/privilege, but for those who would follow.

Such is the nature of progressive revelation.

Such is the nature of service to the larger community of faith - including those we will never personally know in this life.

In what way was their future service regarding future matters revealed to those prophets? We are not wholly sure as not enough information has been provided. It was likely not directly provided, except for extremely limited exceptions such as the experiences of Daniel, who received insight into elements of God's plan yet to be fully experienced (in his case the exception supporting the rule).

"So he came near where I stood. And when he came, I was frightened and fell on my face. But he said to me, 'Understand, O son of man, that the vision is for the time of the end.' And when he had spoken to me, I fell into a deep sleep with my face to the ground. But he touched me and made me stand up. He said, 'Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation, for it refers to the appointed time of the end.'"

Daniel 8:17-19 ESV

"Then he said to me, 'Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I was left there with the kings of Persia, and came to make you understand what is to happen to your people in the latter days. For the vision is for days yet to come.'" Daniel 10:12-14 ESV

While the means of their insight is not well known their service is quite clear. These prophets were laying the foundation for the forthcoming Messiah by revealing God's character, purposes, plans, and elements of who the Redeemer would be and what he would accomplish through both his first and second coming (though that parsing of first and second coming was not as well understood until the completion of Jesus' public ministry and subsequent ascension).

Their labors informed the gospel that has now come to these believers.

The gospel:

It was informed by the prophets who preceded them (the former's service to the later).

In what way was the gospel preached by the Holy Spirit? This appears to express the special authority and empowerment by the Holy Spirit for the declaration of the gospel that transforms hearts.

Announced by those who declared its truths to them.

It was delivered by means of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.

It includes that to which angels long to look.

Why do angels long or earnestly desire to look into such things? Because the redemptive work of Christ for his image bearing elect is extraordinarily wonderful and mysterious, it provides an unmeasurable abundance of reasons for greater worship.

Reflection and Application

The provided testimony of the prophets who preceded these believers demonstrated that they gave themselves to a robust effort in their laboring through the Scriptures to see and understand. They were inquiring about what persons and about what time to anticipate the suffering and subsequent glories of Christ. They did not have precise details or complete clarity into what subsequently came to pass, but they knew critical elements, and they knew they were serving others. Their faithfulness serves as an example to be followed in applying oneself toward the practice of laboring in faithful inquiry of future promises. What a tragedy to have so much special revelation from God – the completed canon of Scripture – just to disregard the glories yet to come or to indifferently wait for whatever it is that is going to happen. What is the testimony of your example in the searching and laboring to better understand what has been accomplished in God's redemptive plan and that which is as sure as anything that has ever been? If necessary, what will you do to improve upon the discipline of searching and laboring in the Scriptures? Date your response so that you can evaluate your progress at a later time.

There were two groups of people that uniquely served the churches that Peter wrote to: the prophets who labored in the Scriptures and those who preached the good news to them. How are you spending your time, strength, and resources in service to future generations of believers, and how are you participating in seeing the gospel declared? If necessary, how will you improve these efforts?

VI. Having a unique historical redemption advantage the believers are called to live in view of Christ's return, as obedient children (1:13-19)

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Submitted Minds

"Therefore" directs our attention to the preceding information and discussion regarding the gospel, suffering, and future glory.

In view of the gospel, suffering, and future glory, Peter directs the churches to prepare, or gird up their minds, for action. He is directing them to think rightly as they engage a challenging world, directing them to not simply be survivors of this world of repulsion and suffering, but a worshipful people with a view to Christ's future revealed glory.

Peter understands that as the mind goes, so goes the person... and it is imperative that their minds are truth saturated.

Jesus makes it very clear that we are to love the Lord our God with our minds by means of correct thinking and pure submission to the truth:

"you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37 ESV

"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Mark 12:30 ESV

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." Luke 10:27 ESV

By contrast, the unbelieving and rebellious are marked by their minds, which are not in accord with the things of God:

"He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts...." Luke 1:51 ESV

"...among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind." Ephesians 2:3 ESV

"They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart." Ephesians 4:18 ESV

"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds...." Colossians 1:21 ESV

Future Glory

In view of the call and expectation to submit one's mind and thinking to the Lord one needs to think and give necessary attention to: the gospel, suffering, and future glory.

Peter is calling on believers to have a ready mind and a sober mind/spirit – a clear and unobstructed disposition of person. There is a clear emphasis on not being impeded in one's thinking, but rather a fixing of one's hope fully on the grace that will be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Peter is telling his readers to give the strength of their attention to the moment that they will be conformed to the image of the Son. This is the very purifying hope that John declares too!

"Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." 1 John 3:2-3 ESV

How does one so set their hope on this future glory? By letting it properly consume their attention and being aware of its wonders. This takes intentional effort in study and meditation upon the Scriptures.

Regarding that future day that we actively anticipate, it will do us well to consider the amazing kindness we are graced with, that when the Lord Jesus comes to be glorified, he expresses that glory in part by extending a final grace on the believer. It is a culminating act for the beloved on the God who abounds with grace upon grace. It is the final act of glorification, it is the completion of the conformity, it is the dismissing of the temporal, and it is no longer gazing through a mirror dimly. However, it is imperative to remember that it is not "our special day," but the day that Jesus Christ is gloriously revealed.

Peter then goes on to build the case that a people who are so fixed in their future focus live different lives in the present. This is because a view to the future calibrates the view and conduct of the present.

This prepared state of mind was consistently addressed by Jesus, and one such time was in Luke 12:

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” Luke 12:35-40 ESV

Final Reflections On 1:13

This call to a proper calibration and stewardship of the mind was not only mentioned here in chapter one, but proved to be an important point of emphasis expressed directly two other times in this letter as Peter exhorted his readers to be sober-minded, clear thinking, not obstructed in their thoughts.

1:13, in view of the fully revealed and magnificently glorious gospel... be so sober-minded, prepared for action, and expectant of our blessed hope.

4:7, in view of the present hostility and the timetable of God's greater plan... be self-controlled and sober-minded with a clear view also to the impact it will have on one's prayers.

5:8, in view of our greatest adversary and the suffering that accompanies his domain of this natural world ... be sober-minded, be watchful.

Peter was giving a call to live in view of the context that they had been called to: antagonism, suffering, struggle, with a view to future glory.

It is no small wonder that such realities are in place when John opened his gospel expressing the nature of this world and its response to Messiah and the Messiah's work in redeeming a people for himself: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." (John 1:10-11 ESV). But then there is the Church, those who have been born again, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his

name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13 ESV)

Expectation of future hope (specifically in the resurrection) is the entire premise of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 15 - it was a hope that demanded that we look beyond the immediate. Peter is making a like call - one's hope must be wholly future focused to the return of our Lord.

"If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied." 1 Corinthians 15:19 ESV

Further, a clear element of what Peter would be drawing from here was what he has just unpacked for them in 1:7, this grace here in 1:13 is in part addressed in this former passage: their precious and tested genuine faith will result in praise and glory and honor at Jesus' final revelation. He again returns to this in 4:13 where we anticipate our rejoicing, again, at the time that Christ's glory is revealed.

This is in no small measure why the book of Revelation itself is such a wonderful blessing to the Church, a view to the day in which our Lord's glory will be revealed at his return and the conclusion of the Redemptive Plan of God - culminating with the final judgment, final restoration, and the eternal state.

So, we plainly see that when Peter begins uniting our blessed hope with action, he does not exclusively call us to be in a general state of happiness, but calls us to alert, focused, and fixed action – there is work to be done and a race to be run – one's life needs to be marked by discipline and action.

**As obedient children, do not be conformed
to the passions of your former ignorance,**

Here Peter is continuing his instruction on living in view of the glorious salvation that he spoke to earlier in the chapter. There is the implicit understanding that one who has been born again is reasonably identified as being an obedient child. Therefore, Peter identifies the readers as obedient children and then directs them to a disposition of maintaining that identity.

Peter refers to them here as children and this appears to be speaking to their general status in God's family as those born again and not to their physical or spiritual maturity.

The prohibition's elements reflect what obedient children do not do, yet he *is* instructing them *not* to do them. So there is an element of, "This is true of you (obedient children - because that is what the regenerate are)", but also, "As obedient children, continue living a consistent life that accurately reflects your identity."

Would stumbling into sin forfeit this identification of them as "obedient children," and if so, how much sin and are they able to recover? The Scriptures are quite clear by way of instruction and example that degrees of struggling and failure will be present, but patterns of struggle/failure do not identify the redeemed. Rather, what identifies them is a disposition of consistent obedience and repentance in their struggles and failures.

**but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all
your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."**

Peter then provides the contrast to the prohibition, do not be sinfully conformed, but maintain a holy conduct. Then he immediately provides a rationale for that expectation: because the Lord who redemptively called you to himself is holy.

He is speaking of the calling in redemption, being born again. Therefore, this speaks to the nature and aim of our redemption: redeemed by a holy God to be a holy people. It is a holy people that please him and bring glory to his great name.

Note that there is no dichotomy of life or action when it comes to holiness. It is not simply holiness in the context of worship or holiness in the context of your relationships, but holiness in all of your conduct. Everything you do is to be marked by the quality of holiness.

Note also that Peter appeals to the authority and demands of the Scriptures (specifically identifying the authority of the Old Testament to apply to these New Covenant believers on this matter): "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

This is a direct reference/citation from Leviticus 11:44,45. In its original context this was a statement qualifying very precise elements of the Mosaic Law's dietary restrictions and liberties for the nation of Israel. This law has no bearing on the believer under the New Covenant, and Peter personally received the most intense instruction on this matter as recorded in Acts 10 – specifically on the subject of clean/unclean animals for food.

Therefore, this requires precise attention to the audience and how this may or may not have impacted their conclusions and the most immediate application of the Old and New Testament Scriptures. This also requires a proper understanding of the outworking of God's Redemptive Plan and how certain elements are fixed and certain elements have changed.

This a matter of an enduring principle as God's character and person are fixed and the temporal dietary rules under the Law of Moses were expressions of that, but not elements of his personal holiness. God's holiness is not diminished if the dietary laws pass or are no longer applied as they were only out-workings and expressions of holiness in that precise context. Therefore, the enduring principle of divine character stands (God is holy), and he consequently demands/requires for those who are identified as his people to be a holy people. Here, in the New Covenant Church context, it is applied to the whole of one's conduct in life as expressed in obedience in Christ.

Peter returns to this common New Testament refrain two more times in his own letter as it is a common struggle and necessary prohibition even for those who are seeking to walk in holiness:

"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul." 1 Peter 2:11 ESV

"Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you...." 1 Peter 4:1-4 ESV

Further, note the emphasis and value on good/proper conduct (expectations and service it renders) - one's conduct is equivalent to how their lives and ways are regarded.

"...but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...." 1 Peter 1:15 ESV

"...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold...." 1 Peter 1:18 ESV

"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." 1 Peter 2:12 ESV

"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct." 1 Peter 3:1-2 ESV

"...having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." 1 Peter 3:16 ESV

And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,

Peter frames this next section with a contingency that had an outcome that was explicitly known/understood. He was stating that because you do call on him as Father who judges impartially, you are to live accordingly. You are to live holy lives with an awareness of your accountability before God, as this temporal life will be examined.

Also, note that Peter regards a proper fear of God as the rightful disposition of the believer and does not regard it as inconsistent with faith, hope, or love. He understands to know God is to fear God.

Further, this fear is framed in the context of the Lord's judging everyone according to each man's deeds, a matter of condemnation for the unbeliever, but potential reward for the believer. No one's deeds are redemptive, save that of Christ's deeds. So, Peter is continuing to compel his readers to proper action in this temporal life, which is framed in a high view of God.

knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

The expressed conduct in fear is rooted in the unparalleled value in one's redemption. Peter was expressing that one's conduct must reflect the high cost of one's redemption.

This ransoming redemption was from the believers prior futile or worthlessly vain lives that were naturally inherited through the first Adam and subsequently through their own fathers. They may or may not have received a temporal/natural inheritance from their forefathers, but they most certainly received the inescapable inheritance of eternal damnation outside of Christ. That is until they were bought back by their heavenly Father through Christ to a sure inheritance of eternal life kept by the power of God.

Peter continues to draw from and return to our magnificent and beautiful salvation in Christ:

- Redeemed, not with perishable things such as silver and gold.... This looks back at the superiority of this sacrifice and its elements of value.
- Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.
- A fitting sacrificial lamb, but this one having the fullness of God in bodily form.

The image of the lamb is explicit, intentional, and perfect:

"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" John 1:29 ESV

"The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" John 1:35-36 ESV

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!'" Revelation 5:12-13 ESV

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" Revelation 7:9-10 ESV

The Lamb of God

Note the redemptive work of the Lamb of God, himself shedding his precious blood and in doing so securing a tried and precious faith in his beloved:

"...so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 1:7 ESV

"...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV

Christ himself is like a lamb without blemish or spot and so purifying his bride.

"...even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him." Ephesians 1:4 ESV

"Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."

Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV

"...he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...." Colossians 1:22 ESV

"...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV

Finally, it is natural and usually wise that something that came at a higher cost or sacrifice is treated in a higher or more careful or more esteemed regard. Christ's atoning work is therefore worthy of the highest esteem.

"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Hebrews 9:11-14 ESV

Reflection and Application

If we are not to simply be survivors of this world of repulsion and suffering, but a worshipful people with a view to Christ's future revealed glory, and if our minds are to be saturated in truth, how must we steward what comes into our minds and what they dwell upon? Perhaps the most immediate way to evaluate this is not necessarily to journal or log your every thought, but to intentionally apply your thinking in a Christ-honoring manner. What does your mind input look like in the following areas and how does it impact the fruits of your thinking, or more precisely... are you prepared for action, sober-minded, and fixed on Christ's return?

1) Bible Reading_____

2) Time in Prayer_____

3) Bible Study_____

4) Meditating & Memorizing Scripture_____

5) Received Discipleship (Teaching & Preaching)_____

Recognizing that the unbelieving world rebelliously chooses not to submit its mind to God and fills our own experience with opportunities to saturate ourselves with that which is of little to no value (and often that which is unbecoming of children of God), how do you guard your mind from laziness and/or wickedness?

Peter builds the case that a people whose minds are future focused live different lives in the present, and that a view to the future calibrates the view and conduct of the present. How does future glory impact your thinking and subsequently your life?

When outside of Christ, there was a disposition of ignorance regarding the things of God including obedience empowered by the Spirit of God to abstain from wicked or displeasing conduct – how is it consistent for one in Christ to knowingly persist in such matters? To know they are offending their Lord? To know the precious nature of their redemption and to not value it more....?

How must the renewed and sober mind, that is rooted in the gospel and looking forward to Christ's return, address such things?

On two very different occasions a prophet is brought to a place where they are afforded the opportunity to behold the glory of God as he occupies his throne and is worshipped – one in the Old Testament, Isaiah 6, and one in the New Testament, Revelation 4. In both instances we see the three-time expression of God's holiness being extolled by the creatures in his presence.

"Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!'" Isaiah 6:2-3 ESV

"And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!'" Revelation 4:8 ESV

The holiness of God is plainly evident in respect to both his attributes and how he is to be worshipped. Now, Peter has called upon the believers to also be holy and he has rooted this charge in the very holiness of God. How, or even why, is God's holiness to impact our own holiness?

Affirming the charge to holiness we also observe that it is a comprehensive charge – holy in all of one's conduct. There are not to be pockets or areas of one's life or experience that are not holy or in active pursuit of holiness. So what does holiness in all of your conduct look like? Are you pursuing holiness in purity, obedience, faithfulness, worship? Answer this in a general manner and then self-examine and identify one area that you need to give particular attention to in pursuit of holiness in all of life. Write it down and date your answer so that at a later time you can return to your answer and examine your progress (Lord willing your returning to this answer will produce thanksgiving to God for your confirming to Christ in greater holiness).

General Answer: _____

Area of Personal Emphasis (Date _____): _____

Peter fully knew the sole basis of one's salvation was dependent on the finished work of Christ and there was absolutely no merit, work, payment, or effort that man can contribute to their being justified before God. So, he is plainly not calling on the believer to fear God because they might fail to execute a necessary deed to secure or maintain their salvation. And he is not even calling on the believe to fear God because they might do something wrong. Peter is calling upon these believers to have a high view of our glorious God, who examines the hearts and deeds of all men. He is to be feared; he is God! However, the believer's works will be examined in the framework of reward, and it is a worthwhile pursuit in this temporal life to live well before a God who judges all men and rewards his faithful children. However, there is another clear element to this charge to conduct themselves in fear as they were redeemed at incomparable cost.

Think of it as someone being gifted a priceless vase that has been in their family for multiple generations and originally gifted to them by a great monarch of a bygone day. There would be great gratitude in receiving the gift and a measure of fear that it is transported and cared for well. Not because the vase might assault or crush them, but because of its great cost and precious value. I think somewhere between these two matters – knowing God examines the hearts and actions of all men, and the pricelessness of our redemption in Christ – lies an expression of this proper fear... this proper esteeming of God.

Consider and then write out how this complex matter of fearing God expresses itself in your praying, thinking, worshipping, and even daily conduct.

John the Baptist most memorably declared of Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God!” and we know that references to the sacrificial lamb are steeped in the language of Old Testament language and continues its poignancy to the New Testament, where it finds its last and most glorious expression in Revelation, where it used of Jesus thirty-one times.

Revelation 5, The Lamb that was slain who is worthy of worship.

Revelation 6, The sovereign authority and righteous judgment of the Lamb.

Revelation 7, The Lamb who is the worthy Redeemer.

Revelation 8, The sovereign authority and righteous judgment of the Lamb.

Revelation 12, The victorious blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 13, The book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

Revelation 14, Israel’s Redeemer and the righteous Judge of the wicked.

Revelation 15, The source of worship and praise.

Revelation 17, The conquering Lamb who is Lord of lords and King of kings.

Revelation 19, The great marriage of the Lamb.

Revelation 21, The centrality and glory of the Lamb in the New Heavens and New Earth.

Revelation 22, The centrality of the throne of God and the Lamb.

How does dwelling on the glorious Lamb of God and our redemption secured through the imperishable and precious blood of Christ like that of a perfect lamb impact your praying, thinking, worship, and daily actions? It is plain that this incomprehensible worth captured Peter... what of you? Write out your reflections and personal applications:

VII. Christ's salvific work was for the benefit of the beloved, with a unique historical redemption advantage (1:20-21)

**He was foreknown before the foundation of the world
but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you**

Foreknown

Continuing his direct treatment on the person and work of Christ, Peter states that Jesus was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but by contrast was made manifest in these last times. In this, Peter was stating that the person of Jesus was present since before the foundation of the world (eternal), but was only known in the present (incarnate) capacity in these last times.

Foreknown, before the foundation of the world, plainly communicates that Christ's redemptive work was the eternal plan of God well before the offense of Adam.¹¹ Two helpful passages express this as common understanding:

"...for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." Acts 4:27-28 ESV

"...who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began...." 2 Timothy 1:9 ESV

Before The Foundation Of The World

Further, "before the foundation of the world" is a definitive marker to express the eternal plans of God being determined/established before the natural creation. All of history, and most precisely the outworking of God's redemptive plan, having been secured in eternity past. In some of the passages, "before," is not reference, so the phrase appears to be a fixed starting point, demonstrating the earliest possible reference to the construct of time and natural action/benefit.

"This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden since the foundation of the world.'" Matthew 13:35 ESV

¹¹ MacArthur, Pg.1941

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" Matthew 25:34 ESV

"...so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation." Luke 11:50-51 ESV

This is an example of drawing from the earliest possible timeframe/foundation as Abel was among the very first children of man and the world's first victim of personal sin of man on man.

"Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24 ESV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him." Ephesians 1:3-4 ESV

"...and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain." Revelation 13:8 ESV

"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come." Revelation 17:8 ESV

These Last Times

"These last times" is a common reference to the time between Christ's first and second coming.¹² This is also known as the Church Age, a special parenthetical break in God's more direct dealing with Israel as they are presently in a state of partial hardening, but following the rapture of the Church there will be a great salvation among Israel and Messiah will rule from Jerusalem for 1,000 years.

For The Sake of You

Is it fair to ask what distinguished this group or even generation of believers to be distinct among all others in the sweep of Redemptive History? The answer is that every generation that experienced a unique work of God were effectively beneficiaries of a kind providence. It is not as though this generation or prior ones, who experienced other marvelous seasons of God's redemptive plan

¹² MacArthur, Pg.1941

unfolding, merited their time in God's plan. It was simply God's timing and they were the fortunate beneficiaries of this season, as are all in the Church Age. This was observed earlier in the chapter too:

"It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." 1 Peter 1:12 ESV

who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

While there were certainly original recipients in mind, the "you" here includes all contemporary and even future believers, as Peter identifies them as believers in the incarnate Jesus who has completed his work.

Peter states that through Jesus these readers are believers in God.

- God, who raised Jesus from the dead.
- God, who gave Jesus glory.

Because they are believers in God through Jesus, their faith and hope are in God.

This appears to be among the places that demonstrate the inner-Trinitarian work of Christ's resurrection (at times the Scriptures state that Jesus rose, and at times the Scriptures state the Father raised Jesus).

As explicitly established in the introduction, so it is reaffirmed here, the believers have been born again to a living hope "...through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1Peter 1:3 ESV The believer's living hope is in Christ's resurrection.¹³

¹³ Cook, Pg.841

Reflection and Application

God foreknowing his elect has often been a subject of contentious debate surrounding the meaning of someone being foreknown in a context of salvation. How does Jesus being foreknown before the foundation of the world help clarify this argument?

Beyond matters of debate, how does a proper understanding of the fact that God's redemptive plan that was experienced at a definitive point in time, some four thousand years after Adam, being secured and made sure before the foundation of the world impact your thinking, worship, prayer, and daily actions? In answering, consider the fact that there had been neither the creation of man nor the fall... when the wisdom of God delighted in receiving glory expressed through the incarnate, crucified, and resurrected Son.

The New Covenant Church worships on Sunday because it is the day on which Christ rose from the dead. Therefore, every week is Resurrection Sunday as every week is centered on the resurrection. However, in keeping with the pattern observed throughout the Scriptures, we have a special day of remembrance and we place special emphasis on a particular Resurrection Sunday in the Spring (often called Easter Sunday). The Church places such emphasis on Sunday as the resurrection is preeminent to our glorious hope because as Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 15, "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:13-14 ESV

With this in view, what is the relation of Christ's resurrection and our being believers whose faith and hope are in God who raised Jesus from the dead?

VIII. A returned emphasis on a proper response to one's costly redemption and the parallel development of the role and nature of the imperishable or eternal word of God (1:22-25)

**Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth
for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,**

Continuing to speak to the glory and working out of the believer's redemption, Peter speaks and presses toward responsive application.

Purifying one's soul appears to be an unambiguous reference to the new birth, at which time the Lord purifies their heart; and within the believer's life the first buds of evidentiary fruit in the form of obedience begin to come forth.

Therefore, it can be confidently stated that when one is purified, forgiven, and transformed in Christ there will be evidentiary fruit. Or as Christ explicitly stated, the one who abides in him will bear much fruit, and a lack of fruit is indicative of a lack of genuine abiding.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned."

John 15:1-6 ESV

Further, one of the primary, and even plainest, expressions of evidentiary fruit that one has had their soul purified by the gloriously finished work of Christ is loving one another.

"Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:9-11 ESV

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:7-12 ESV

Note also the charge is not simply to love one another, but to love one another earnestly or intently... with enthusiastic effort.

**since you have been born again, not of perishable seed
but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;
for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains
forever." And this word is the good news that was preached to you.**

The rationale or reason for expecting believers to love one another, and like expressions of obedience, is that they have been "born again," and here Peter goes on to speak to the quality of this new birth.

- Born again – not of perishable seed, but imperishable.
- Born again – through the living and abiding word of God.

The imperishable seed provides means to an imperishable inheritance (1:4,23), and this rebirth to an imperishable inheritance is accomplished through the hearing and believing of the word of God which is living, active, and powerful.

"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12 ESV

Here Peter gives a capping affirmation that whereas the Holy Spirit was involved in their salvation (1:12), the means was by the declaration of the word of God. So, it was a work by the Spirit (1:12) and through the Word (1:23).

Further, Peter continued on by reinforcing and demonstrating what he had just stated about the superior work of being born again by the Spirit of God and through the Word of God. He demonstrated that this was the very thing already expressed in the Scriptures in Isaiah 40.

"A voice says, 'Cry!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." Isaiah 40:6-8 ESV

Peter demonstrates most plainly the place and value of the Scriptures in the redemption of God's elect.

- Born again, not of perishable seed: "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls...."
- Born again, of imperishable seed: "...the word of the Lord remains forever."

This imperishable seed, the living and abiding word of God, "...is the good news that was preached to you."

Note that this explicitly ties the whole of the gospel to the Old Testament Scriptures too... yes there was progressive revelation: Things into which angels long to look, 1:12. But it was plain enough that the prophets of old searched for the details of that which they clearly understood, 1:10-11.

The imperishable gospel in the Word of God was declared to them, and upon hearing they believed, and in believing they were born again.

Paul expresses the same thing, but in a more direct manner that fits his argument: faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.

"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." Romans 10:17 ESV

It is also the testimony that Paul affirms among the Colossians, a church that he did not plant, but that he could affirm on these common grounds that the gospel was declared through the Scriptures and was heard and believed.

"...since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth...." Colossians 1:4-6 ESV

Finally, for astute students who took notice that Peter uses ῥῆμα (rēma), which is primarily used for a spoken word rather than the more commonly used λόγος (logos) for word, there is quite good precedent. Jesus himself having quoted Deuteronomy three times in rebuffing Satan's temptations stated, "But he answered, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word/ ῥῆμα that comes from the mouth of God.'" Matthew 4:4 ESV

Reflection and Application

It is rightly stated that not one of us ultimately knows the heart of another, but what we can speak to are the evidentiary fruits of one's life – a direct reflection of the heart. Jesus speaks to the heart being revealed through the mouth in Luke 6.

"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." Luke 6:43-45 ESV

Jesus also made it plain that those who are abiding with/in him or that are in righteous communion with him bear fruit as observed in John 15, and later this was expressed by James in the form of faith intimately being identified through works in James 2. James' treatment of this subject was framed with the illustrative question of loving action being taken for a brother or sister in genuine need.

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." James 2:14-17 ESV

With these affirmations that the man or woman who has been born again will produce evidentiary works, and that one of the plainest works that should be universally present among believer is loving one another, how do you heed the charge to love one another earnestly from a pure heart? Write out examples of when you have strived to do this, when you have failed to do this, when you have been the recipient of this, and how you will make tangible progress in this area.

If it is true that the Holy Spirit was involved in the believer’s salvation (1:12) and that the means of the work of conversion was by the declaration of the word of God (1:23), then it can be affirmed that salvation is a work by the Spirit of God and through the Word of God. How then does this impact your understanding and practice of sharing the gospel?

Peter quotes Isaiah 40 as the imperishable Word of God which is properly adorned and esteemed, particularly for its role in the conversion of God's elect exiles. How does such an esteeming of the Scriptures impact your engagement of them on a day to day level? Where might you make improvements on more properly esteeming this treasure that you have such abundant and free access to in a way that so very few have throughout history?
