

Sermon: The Coming Salvation

Text: I Peter 1:3-12

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Introduction: There are many kinds of letters and various reasons for writing. I Peter is a letter written to a number of churches in Asia Minor (which is modern-day Turkey). It was meant to be a circular letter. Its message was universal, and still offers instruction and encouragement today.

The original recipients of this letter were facing persecution and suffering and Peter wanted to reassure his audience. He wanted to provide a word of hope for the days ahead.

I Peter 1:1-2 (NIV) ¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, ²who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Peter as a pastor begins to organize his thoughts for the flock in terms of past, present and future. This is more than a lesson in time and history, but a foundational teaching to make sense out of suffering.

Peter says there are reasons to praise God even in the midst of current conditions:

I. Our Future Reward Is Secure (vv. 3-5).

I Peter 1:3-5 (NIV) ³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, ⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have evidences to the fact our future reward is secure: God has given us new birth.

This “new birth” has given us a fresh start. This act of redemption was at the cost of Jesus' life and pure grace. God chose *us*! What happens to us at our conversion is so radical it is called “born again.” This “new birth” is made possible by the Holy Spirit entering our lives as a gift at our baptism. We are made into *new* people, and for this, we offer up praise to God.

One of the experiences of this “new birth” is God has placed us, as it were, into (*eis*) a living hope. Much of the world has a viewpoint similar to Sophocles, a 5th century B.C. playwright who wrote “Not to be born at all -- that is by far the best fortune; the second best is as soon as one is born with all speed to return thither whence one has come.” There’s a cheery guy to hangout with.

The Old Testament writers (Isaiah and the Preacher of Ecclesiastes) promoted eating and drinking as a pleasure in life, but always with God in mind and always with the realization that a person’s days are numbered.

But, now, through (*dia*, i.e., *by means of*) the resurrection of Jesus Christ we have a “living hope.” Kelly says, “Christ’s resurrection is the ground or guarantee of our resurrection hope.” In other words since Christ raised from the dead we now have real and substantial hope. It is not wishful thinking like “I hope so.”

Another part of this sureness is: God is guarding our inheritance. Not just anyone, but God is responsible for our inheritance. In the OT the idea of inheritance was connected to the Promised Land of Canaan ([Deuteronomy 15:4](#)); now, it is eternal life in heaven with the Heavenly Father; His Son, Jesus; and the Holy Spirit and all his angels.

In contrast then, heaven “is untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time” (Beare).

Our future is secure because it is heaven. In heaven nothing will ever perish, spoil or fade. So, not only does the environment protect, God’s power protects us. One may ask the question: what is “The Coming Salvation?” Some might say heaven, but that is only part of the answer. One might also say that Jesus is “The Coming Salvation.”

[Colossians 3:1-4 \(NIV\)](#) ¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Knowing our future reward is secure helps to bring peace into our sometimes troubled and worried daily lives. We know through faith:

II. Our Present Reward Is Secure (vv. 6-9).

I Peter 1:6-9 (NIV) ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Our present reward is secure, and it is good to know that our present trials are only temporary. The text says: “for a little while.” Grief will not last forever. The troubles and griefs of this world are wiped away just like the tears from our eyes that God removes.

Peter is no “pie in the sky” preacher. He understands full well what life may hold for us. He never promises, nor does our Lord, there will be no storms or difficulties in our lives. Our loved ones will die, jobs will be lost, marriages may dissolve, children may disappoint, we may fail, but there is One who will never fail us. Peter understands quite well life’s circumstances can create grief.

But rather than becoming a pessimist and one who is always bemoaning his fate, Peter says that present trials may even be helpful. Our text clearly points out trials can prove faith to be genuine.

The Scripture says that we who follow Jesus are rich. Our faith is worth more than gold. But even gold just like faith must go through refining. These trials of faith that Peter says will come do not create faith, but show it for what it is: either counterfeit or genuine.

In our culture there are a lot of commodities for sale. Some who run after the false gods of this world sell out and way too cheaply like Esau who sold his birthright for a meal. There are some things that are priceless: character, reputation, and Peter says faith is worth more than fine gold.

Beside the value of our faith for us, it also produces praise, glory and honor for God. It should always be our goal in life to make God look good. I sometimes fail, but everyday I ask God to help me be a good man, a good husband, and a good witness for his glory.

You remember Thomas after the resurrection and how he doubted Jesus was alive. Jesus appeared in a house that had locked doors.

John 20:29 (NIV) ²⁹Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Here in our text, Peter is praising those in the Asia-Minor churches for still having faith without physically seeing Jesus. Yet, faith's goal which is salvation can be realized now. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers now as a down-payment of the soon-coming reality of God's presence face-to-face in heaven. And that produces inexpressible joy! This joy "exceeds the power of speech and thought" (Beare).

III. The Past Provided a Foundation (vv. 10-12).

I Peter 1:10-12 (NIV) ¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

"Here we have the great truth that inspiration depends on two things - the searching mind of man, and the revealing Spirit of God" (Barclay).

The prophets helped us find salvation. They intensely listened for God, diligently searched for God, and God found them and used them to prepare people for the coming of Jesus. The Apostle Peter, as he preaches the Pentecost sermon that initiates the Church, quotes Joel and psalms written by David and inspired by God. The response was that thousands of people came to faith that day. A foundation was laid.

Those who have preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit help(ed) provide opportunity for hearers to accept God's wonderful gift of Himself. The Holy Spirit is active in the conversion of anyone who is seeking God. And the Holy Spirit remains in the person who has come to faith to remind them of their new life in God through Jesus Christ.

There are many of examples of how the Holy Spirit works with the preacher, through the words of the prophets, and in the life of the prospect. There is the account of Peter and Cornelius:

Acts 10:39-48 (NIV) ³⁹"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by

us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days. **(also Philip with the Ethiopian official in Acts 8:26-39)**

There has been a deafness to the Word even after the resurrection. Everyone has their own idea of who God is, and what He is offering. You might remember Jesus tried to clear it up for those men on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:25-27 (NIV) ²⁵He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

You want to know Jesus? You must know the Word.

You want to know what Jesus wants from you? You must know the Word.

You want to be a part of The Coming Salvation? You must know the Word.

So God has always been working, wanting everyone to have salvation. And that can be found in no other than Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Peter is directed by God to produce a circular letter for the churches in Asia Minor that would serve the rest of Christians down through the ages until Jesus comes.

“The story is told of an evangelist who approached the famous theologian H. Richard Niebuhr on the streets of New York. He asked Niebuhr the question he asked everyone: ‘Are you saved?’

Niebuhr, a man who took others with the utmost seriousness, paused a moment and then gave this thoughtful reply: ‘I was saved by what Christ did; I am being saved right now; I shall be saved when the kingdom comes.’ The reply of the street evangelist has not been recorded for posterity.” - Serendipity, *I Peter*, p. 22

In this opening section of I Peter it says that our salvation even makes the angels envious. Though life may be difficult now or in the future, life can be good! Why? Because at the end of everything, God is waiting for His faithful children, and He is waiting where we will live with Him forever: heaven!