

Sunday October 3rd 2010

Petros

Part Sixteen

1). 1Pe 3:21 ¶ *There is also an antitype which now saves us--baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. 4:1 ¶ Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, 2 that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 ¶ In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. 5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

a). We had seen last week how Noah and his family being brought safely through the flood is presented to us as a type, the antitype of this, which now saves us, is ‘*baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,*’

b). If we remove the explanatory statement contained in the brackets, we find that the antitype which now saves us is ‘*baptism, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ*’. It is only in the power of His resurrection that we may walk in newness of life; it is only by being buried with Him in His death that we are able to be raised by the Spirit to walk in the Spirit in His resurrection.

c). In our foundational types for baptism found in Genesis Chapter 1 in the verses that deal with the third day and Exodus Chapter 14 that deal with the Red Sea crossing we saw that only that which is raised from the place of death by the power of the Spirit in response to God’s word can produce fruit and be led by the Spirit towards the inheritance that God has promised.

d) We saw that there is first death, then burial and then resurrection on the third day all of which will ultimately result in rulership - Ro 6:3 *Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also*

should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

e). Col 2:11 *In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

f). It is the determination to keep our 'old man' in the place of death and to walk according to the Spirit that is at the very heart of our picture of baptism – It is continuing in this process throughout the course of our Christian life that will give us the answer of a good conscience toward God, which will result in our receiving the salvation of our soul at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Lord Himself is our example and the One in whose footsteps we are to follow, and the end of Chapter 3 makes perfectly clear the outcome of His actions - *22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.*

g). Now clearly the Lord never had to keep His old man in the place of death as He has never had an old man, being completely apart from sin, but it is the example that He gives that our attention is drawn to at the beginning of Chapter 4.

2). 4:1 ¶ *Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,*

a). The word 'therefore' would take us back to that which has gone before and in the immediate context this would be Christ's suffering in the flesh with patient endurance that has resulted in His exaltation, with angels, authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

b). And His suffering in the flesh within our letter has to do with His unjust punishment - 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

c). And our first verse of Chapter 4 here says that we are to arm ourselves also with the same mind. In other words we are to have the same attitude towards unjust treatment as Christ had. And we will remember the harsh master and the disobedient husband and the contentious wife. I am sure that we will remember the scriptures from earlier in Peter - 1Pe 2:19 *For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit*

is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

d). 1Pe 3:17 *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

e). So it is with this same mind as Christ had that we to ‘arm’ ourselves.

f). Arm = Greek – ‘hoplizo’ = to equip [with weapons]

g). In its secular use this word would refer to a heavily armed foot soldier, a soldier who was well protected with a large shield and well prepared with weapons for the battle ahead of him. It would I am sure be very easy to see how arming ourselves with the same mind as Christ had with regards to ‘enduring grief, suffering wrongfully’ would be a necessary part of our armor in the spiritual warfare - Eph 6:16 *above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;*

h). To have the same attitude toward unjust suffering that the Lord had will cause us to react towards this suffering as He did, thereby quenching the fiery darts of the wicked one who would have us do otherwise.

i). Now, unlike Christ we do have a sin nature, an old man, who does have to be kept in the place of death and therefore our suffering in the flesh would really be twofold. We would suffer in the flesh as we experience suffering wrongfully at the hands of others and in order to get to the place where we choose to endure this grief with the same attitude as Christ had we will have had to have died to our flesh, our sin nature, keeping our old man in the place of death - Lu 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

j). And this is a choice that can only be made as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit in through the word - Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

3). The second half of 4:1 may appear a little difficult - *for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,* - and the difficulty comes through the word translated ‘ceased’, which suggests from our English usage that the person who has ‘suffered in the flesh’ doesn’t sin any more.

a). In the original language however, this verb is passive and would be literally translated, ‘has been released from sin’. This would be the very same idea we saw in –Ro 6:6 *knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

b). So then, the person who ‘endures grief, suffering wrongfully’, having the same mind and therefore displaying the same attitude to this as Christ did, is witness to the fact that the power of sin is broken in their life. They do not respond in the same way that the world would respond, or as those Christians who still act out of their flesh, but rather they respond in faithful obedience, aligning themselves with the commands of scripture. And here is the thing, having been eternally redeemed and therefore having died with Him, the power of sin, through the power of God has been broken in the life of each one of us. What we will now do in response to the word of God is down to our own choice - Ro 6:16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

c). The choice then to arm themselves with the same mind as Christ will have been done in their mortal body, during this life, which is another way that we should understand the phrase ‘in the flesh’ in this context, which is important for us to know because of the next verse - 2 *that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.*

d). Here in this verse we find the reason why we have been released from sin – it is so that we should not spend the rest of our life in the sphere of the lusts of men, but that we should instead live the rest of our lives in the sphere of the will of God.

e). This is the same idea we have already seen in - 1Pe 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

f). There is no reason why we should not live the rest of our lives for the will of God, but it does still remain a choice.

4). 1Pe 4:3 *For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.*

a). That which is translated ‘our past lifetime’ here, in the original language, refers to a period of time that is complete, closed and over. And in essence our scripture teaches us that we had more than enough time before the point of our eternal salvation to sin until we bust, but that time is now over and is not to be repeated.

b). During that past time we did ‘the will of the Gentiles’ – we followed the direction and the mindset of the world which resulted in the practice of the sins cataloged in the second half of our verse, but our life now is separated from these, so that those things that we once did in our ignorance now become the object of

our rejection - 1Pe 1:13 ¶ *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; 15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."*

c). Our whole life now has a totally different focus and a set of values that are determined by scripture alone – the wisdom of man with regards to morality, ethics or anything else for that matter is of no consequence whatsoever. It is the pure milk of the word and our scriptural response to it, to the exclusion of all else, that will bring us to the salvation of our soul - 2Ti 3:15 *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

d). Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

5). 1Pe 4:4 ¶ *In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.*

a). Our scripture continues by pointing out that with regards to our former way of life, when we were in ignorance, those who still continue in that former way ‘think it strange’, literally think it is foreign to our nature that we don’t continue to ‘run with them in the same flood of dissipation’, and as a result, because we now appear to be so different, they will speak evil with regards to us. This is what we saw in - 1Pe 3:15 *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 ¶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

b). I know we understand this, but let’s be absolutely clear, that once we have set our face like flint towards the New Jerusalem, and determine to allow the word of God to change us, then hostility will always come our way, and although it may come from the unsaved, it is much more likely to come from other Christians who do not want to walk the same path.

c). Evil will be spoken of us, and whether it is from within or without of the family of God is of no real consequence. From the Lord’s perspective He left those who reviled Him and caused His suffering alone, knowing that His Father judges righteously – 1Pe 2:23 *who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

d). And as we continue in Chapter 4 we are reminded of this very thing –

1Pe 4:5 *They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*

e). The judgment of God on every human being that has ever lived is absolutely certain – He will judge those who have eternal life as well as those who are eternally lost, the living and the dead, and all judgment will be with respect to one thing only – Mt 16:27 *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

f). And so we need to take responsibility for our own faithful obedience to the word and allow God to deal with the rest. And deal with it He will at the appropriate time.

6). 1Pe 4:6 *For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

a). And judgment remains the subject of our next verse, a verse that can appear quite difficult unless we view it in context. Our context throughout the Book could be briefly stated in one verse - 1Pe 3:17 *For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*

b). Those who are ‘dead’ here are not the eternally lost, but those Christians who literally have died, whose life on earth has ended and historically this could be as a result of the Roman persecution. While they were alive though, while they were ‘in the flesh’ the gospel, not only of the grace of God, but also the glories of Christ was preached to them. As a result of hearing the gospel of Christ and determining to be separated from the world by living in faithful obedience, they might [probably would] be judged by men who would defame them as evildoers and revile their good conduct in Christ and may even have put them to death. Their faithful obedience then from the standpoint on Man was to them death, but from God’s perspective that same faithful obedience would produce life, in the Spirit, in the age to come. And herein is the complete dichotomy between the world’s judgment and God’s.

c). 1Pe 3:13 *And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?*

d). 2Ti 3:12 *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

e). Mt 10:28 *"And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.*

7). 1Pe 4:7 ¶ *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*

a). The opening of our 7th verse here should more literally read – ‘of all things, the end is at hand’. Now clearly neither their persecution, nor the end of Man’s Day was ‘at hand’ in the sense of having an imminent conclusion, and we would know this as Peter himself draws attention to the timeframe involved with regards to the end of Man’s Day in - 2Pe 3:8 ¶ *But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

b). Rather than being imminent we could understand the end being ‘at hand’ in the same way that we understood - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

c). The King being in the midst of His people Israel meant that the Kingdom of the Heavens was there for the taking, so to speak, if they would come to repentance. It just needed the nation to act in faith in order to receive the Kingdom of the Heavens that Christ came to offer.

d). Following Christ’s resurrection with His appearance in Tartarus and His ascension to the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him, the end, the fulfillment of God’s plans and purposes with respect to the Church and the Kingdom of the Heavens, which had been taken from Israel, is there for the taking, for those eternally saved individuals from this dispensation who would organize their lives accordingly and choose to live by faith.

e). And so because of the certainty of the 7th Day and the certainty of our appearance at the Judgment Seat, the exhortation is to ‘therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers’.

f). The word translated ‘serious’ has to do with having a sound mind and is translated elsewhere as ‘soberly minded’ and being in a ‘right mind’. This is a mind that will be settled with regards to no longer doing the will of the Gentiles, but instead doing the will of God; a mind that is being transformed by the Holy Spirit through the word of God - Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*

g). A mind that trusts God completely without doubting - Jas 1:7 *For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

h). The word translated ‘watch’ - *and watchful in your prayers.* - is translated elsewhere as ‘sober’ and is a Greek word meaning ‘calm and collected in spirit’ and the word translated ‘in’ is literally ‘with a view to’ – In other words we need to be calm and collected in our spirit when it comes to our prayer life. This again

would take us to the righteous man we would find in the Book of James whose fervent prayer avails much.

i). And again we are exhorted to do these things because God's plans and purposes for Man are in place in their completed form awaiting those who will run with endurance the race set before them.

8). 1Pe 4:8 *And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

a). And again, because of all things the end is at hand, and with our praying still in mind, we must place before all in order of importance – 'fervent love for one another'.

b). The love we are to have, which is described here is 'agape' love – that love which is itself the very character of God. - 1Jo 4:8b... *for God is love.*[agape]

c). It is the same love that we are to have that we saw in Chapter 1 – 1Pe 1:22 *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,*

d). This is the kind of love that is only attainable through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we are transformed by the word.

e). In 1 Peter 1:22 we will remember that Peter's readers had 'purified their souls' in obeying the truth and this had resulted in 'sincere phileo/love of the brethren. Having attained phileo/love then agape/love is what follows. And what we will note is that there is a definite progression towards agape/love that can only begin in 'obeying the truth' – in faithful obedience.

f). And this progressive process the Holy Spirit, through Peter, draws attention to again in - 2Pe 1:5 ¶ *But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.*

g). Agape/love, the Divine love that is the nature of God is not ours automatically, nor can it be accomplished by our own efforts in the sense that we can just choose to do it. Rather than this, what we see in 1 Peter and more fully expounded in 2 Peter, and we will deal with this 2 Peter scripture much more thoroughly when we get to it, is that there is a progressive process – a process that can only begin with the foundation of faith – believing what God has said – 'obeying the truth' – faithful obedience.

h). The words 'add to' are more literally translated 'abundantly supply in' – and so we are to abundantly supply in our faith, virtue, and we are to abundantly supply in our virtue, knowledge; and abundantly supply in our knowledge, self-control; and abundantly supply in our self-control, perseverance; and abundantly supply in our perseverance, godliness; and abundantly supply in our godliness,

brotherly kindness [philadelphia/phileo] – all of which then allows us to supply abundantly in our brotherly kindness, agape/love. And agape/love appears after all these other things because it is the very pinnacle of Christian experience and nothing can be added to it. This is what we are aiming for.

i). And according to our scripture we need to attain to this Divine love, especially as we pray for one another, *for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

j). The phrase *"love will cover a multitude of sins."* is placed in inverted commas because it is drawn from Proverbs 10. So let's place the phrase within its context there and see what we find - Pr 10:11 ¶ *The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, But violence covers the mouth of the wicked. 12 ¶ Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins. 13 ¶ Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding, But a rod is for the back of him who is devoid of understanding. 14 ¶ Wise people store up knowledge, But the mouth of the foolish is near destruction.*

k). What we see here then is that our phrase, which appears at the end of v12 is within a context that makes striking contrasts when it comes to the use of the mouth, and here in Proverbs is the only place in the OT where this phrase occurs.

l). The phrase 'will cover a multitude of sin' appears only 2 places in the NT. Once in Peter and the other in James - Jas 5:19 *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.*

m). In the Book of James our scripture is squarely placed within the context of prayer, which is exactly where we find ourselves in Peter; the example given to us in James of what it means to turn a sinner from the error of his way is that of Elijah - Jas 5:17 *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

n). Elijah's first prayer was answered by there being no rain on the land for three years and six months. Because of this Israel was brought to repentance, receiving forgiveness and cleansing from God - then, in response to Elijah's second prayer, fruitfulness is restored.

o). This would be the intent behind turning back the one who has wandered from the truth. Through prayer, God may intervene, as with Israel, and if God's intervention results in repentance, receiving forgiveness and cleansing, then the multitude of sins that come as a result of the one turning away from the truth, are removed – they are now out of sight, they are covered. And with respect to our scripture from James, the one who has interceded for his brother in this way is credited by God with having saved a soul from death.

p). Saving a soul from death in James and having fervent love in Peter both have the same result – ‘covering a multitude of sins’ and therefore we could see these two as one and the same. And this would be perfectly consistent with the progression we find in James where we are taken from grumbling against each other at the beginning of the Book to the pinnacle of saving a soul from death at the Book’s close.

q). And such would be the intent with our scripture from Peter –
1Pe 4:7 ¶ *But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. 8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."*

r). And if the Lord is willing we will continue with this next week.