

Sunday June 27th 2010

Petros

Part Three

1). 1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

a). We have seen in past weeks the historical context in which Peter writes his first letter to - 1Pe 1:1..... *the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,*

b). A context that encompassed sound doctrine being taught by Paul, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla and Apollos, now being set against a backdrop of impending persecution at the hands of the Roman empire under Nero.

c). We have also seen how, in the opening two verses, Peter drew attention to his apostleship and his readers election by the foreknowledge of God to be sown into the world for the purpose of producing the fruit of the Kingdom.

d). And we then saw how he closed his opening address with a request for the grace necessary to suffer wrongfully and the multiplication of the peace of God that they should be anxious for nothing in the midst of this.

e). And so, his letter continues, in verse 3, with our opening scripture for this morning, a scripture that draws attention to the ultimate conclusion that awaits those who are faithfully obedient irrespective of the circumstances they find themselves in – the salvation of the soul.

2). *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*

a). V3 begins then with Peter praising God in the sense of speaking well of Him which is what the word ‘blessed’ gives to us.

b). What follows, at first glance, may appear to be a fairly ordinary phrase, but in reality it is fraught with significance.

c). God is described as both the God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And this immediately brings to clarity the Lord's incarnation - *Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Ga 4:4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

d). As God the Son, the Lord is the second person of the Trinity and there is therefore complete harmony and equality between the three in one –

De 6:4 ¶ "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

e). Yet despite this indisputable equality and despite retaining the nature and character of His deity the Lord humbled Himself choosing, for the purpose to be accomplished by His incarnation, to place Himself under the authority of God the Father within a Father/Son relationship. Now this is exactly what we see laid out for us in our Philippians scripture and exactly what we find in practice in – *Mt 26:39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."*

f). In other words, in His human incarnation the Lord worshipped God as His God and Father through His faithful obedience, just as we should, not choosing to hold on to the outward form of Deity - *Heb 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned[experienced/practiced] obedience by the things which He suffered.*

g). Our phrase then at the beginning of v3 ends with Peter now making clear that the One he is talking about although in the likeness of a man is indeed God incarnate – the name Jesus means, 'Jehovah-Savior' and the title 'the Christ' is the anointed One - *Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;*

h). And all of this together immediately takes us back to 2 Samuel Chapter 7 and the promise God made to David, which we will remember is the very thing that Peter referenced in that first message on the day of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit was being poured out - *Ac 2:29 "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne,*

3). *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again*

a). V3 continues by showing the result of God's abundant mercy – we have been begotten again. The way this is written in the original language shows that God was impelled by His abundant mercy. The nature and character of God expressed in mercy of necessity brought about this action.

b). And obviously in order for us to be able to have access to the Kingdom it was necessary for us to be 'born again', to pass from death to life, to experience our new birth – and this would be an absolute truth.

c). However we would also need to see this statement in a context that takes us beyond our new birth and see it in the same way that the Lord speaks of it to Nicodemus in –Joh 3:3 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

d). Jesus here of course is talking to an eternally saved Jew about entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom of the Heavens and is therefore not talking about eternal salvation, but the process that is required to see/to enter the Kingdom.

e). The phrase 'born again' would be more correctly understood as 'brought forth from above'. And probably the best scriptural example we have of this, which confirms our own personal experience, is that of Peter at Caesarea Philippi when he receives the revelation upon which Christ will build His church –
Mt 16:17 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

f). And all of this would be perfectly in keeping with the way our scripture in Peter continues.

4). *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

a). So continuing from where we were, we have been brought forth from above – we have understanding and faith regarding a living hope that has come through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead which has been given to us through the work of the Spirit, from above.

b). We would need to understand this in two ways – our living hope is in Jesus Christ being resurrected from the dead, and because of His resurrection our faith and understanding of this has been able to be brought forth from above.

c). To deal the second one first - because He was resurrected our faith and understanding of the living hope have been brought forth from above – this has to do with the promise of the Holy Spirit that the Lord gives in the Gospel of John –

Joh 15:26 ¶ *"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

Joh 16:7 ¶ *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.*

Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

d). We will realize then that the only way that the Holy Spirit would be able to guide us into all truth is if He were sent from the Father and He couldn't be sent unless the Lord was resurrected, which is exactly what we see in John 16:7.

e). It is because Christ has been resurrected that the Holy Spirit has come and is guiding us into all truth and telling us things to come so that we can have understanding and faith in the living hope that is set before us. In this sense what we know and what we have faith in is brought forth from above through the Spirit by the Word.

f). And now to go back to our first assertion - our living hope is in Jesus Christ being resurrected from the dead. Our living hope is in Christ because our living hope is Christ, but not just that He is the Christ per se, but rather in something specific concerning Him. And to understand this we can go to –

Tit 2:13 *looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*

g). Our great God is our Savior Jesus Christ and our blessed hope and His glorious appearing are one and the same thing. Our hope then is in the glorious appearing of Christ a second time apart from sin for the purpose of establishing His Kingdom with His Bride, having overthrown Satan and Gentile world power -

Heb 9:28 *so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.*

And this hope is living because Christ is alive - Re 1:18 *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.*

Col 1:18 *And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

h). This is the very reason that Peter emphasizes the resurrection of the Lord in his message on the day of Pentecost - Ac 2:23 *"Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 "whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 "For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. 27 For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. 28*

You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' 29 *"Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 "he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.*

i). Perhaps now we can hear with the ears of faith the full significance of what Peter says here as he quotes from Psalm 16. David says in this Psalm that he can rest in hope knowing that the Lord would make him full of joy in His presence something that can only happen because of the resurrection of Christ. And this is the very same thing recorded in – Job 19:25 *For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; 26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, 27 Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!*

Ro 8:29 ¶ *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

j). Everything concerning the fulfillment of God's plans and purposes for the ages is dependent on the resurrection of the Christ. His death and shed blood provides the means for eternal redemption, but His resurrection opens the door to the Millennial Kingdom. The importance of this is also addressed by Paul in –

1Co 15:13 *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up--if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. 20 ¶ But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

k). It is in the absolute certainty of Christ's resurrection that the promises and purposes of God are certain. Here is our hope, here is our joy, here is our salvation and here the motivation for our faithful obedience. If there had been no resurrection then we would be the most pitiable of all people.

5). V4 of 1 Peter Chapter 1 then provides the substance contained in our hope *4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,*

a). We have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead in order to receive an inheritance. The word inheritance literally means ‘heirship’, and those found worthy at the Judgment Seat will of course be joint heirs with Christ. The terms and conditions for attaining this status we already know - Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

b). And this inheritance will not decay as it waits for a future fulfillment and is pure just as our High Priest is pure and is not fading or transient, but perpetual and is reserved in heaven for us. So our inheritance is not access to ‘heaven’, but something to be found there.

c). The word reserved = Greek – ‘tereo’ = to guard (from loss or injury, properly, by keeping the eye upon).

d). This is written in the perfect tense speaking of a past completed action having present results. So our inheritance was set in place from time past and has been guarded by God since then in readiness for those who will receive it.

6). And those who will receive the inheritance are those - *5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

a). What we will automatically see here is that some Christians will be kept by the power of God for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time and some Christians won’t. The one factor that marks the difference between the two is faith.

b). Now this is not the saving faith of salvation by grace, for if this were the case then all Christians would, without exception, receive the salvation of their soul. But the clear evidence of scripture over and over again, as we know, is that this is not the case. We are therefore looking at ‘the faith’ – believing and then applying that which the scriptures say concerning the coming Kingdom of Christ and how to gain entrance into it.

c). And according to our scripture those who live by ‘the faith’ are kept by the power of God for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

d). Kept = Greek – ‘phroureo’ = to be a watcher in advance, i.e. to mount guard as a sentinel (post spies at gates); figuratively, to hem in, protect:--keep (with a garrison).

e). This is an absolutely incredible concept as we see in this the supernatural protection of God guarding us so that we will receive the salvation of our souls. I wonder if this might be part of the angelic work on our behalf referenced in – Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

f). But let’s be absolutely clear about this – the power of God doesn’t keep us just because we have an understanding of Kingdom truth, but because we put

into practice, we are faithfully obedient to the Word of God on a consistent basis with respect to that truth. We cannot possibly knowingly and deliberately refuse to do what the word says and expect the power of God to be active on our behalf – this is not going to happen.

g). And let's also be clear that the power of God does not keep us from trial and tribulation and suffering for these things scripture promises us, rather the power of God works on our behalf in the midst of these as we choose faithful obedience in the midst of our situation thereby protecting us with regards to the salvation yet to come.

h). The best example we have of this is the Lord Himself who conducted Himself on the earth in total obedience to the Father, something we have already seen in Philippians Chapter 2 today - *8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

i). The power of God did not keep Jesus from the suffering and the agony of the cross, but because in the midst of the suffering He trusted His Father by being obedient to Him - *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;*

The power of God then worked on His behalf in response to His faithful obedience to fulfill God's purpose for Christ's incarnation - *Eph 1:19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

j). It is the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead and the power of God that seated Him at God's right hand in an exalted position 'above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.' Now this did not happen just because Jesus is God's Son; God will not act outside of the criteria He has set and so we must dispel the myth that this happened just because Jesus is Jesus. Because to take such a view makes meaningless Christ's obedience to His Father, which in turn would nullify the example that He gives to us. God responded to Jesus' faithful obedience through the exercise of His power, even raising Jesus from the dead so that Jesus would attain that for which He had faithfully labored – *Heb 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such*

hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 ¶ You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.

k). It was for the joy that was set before Him – rulership in the coming Kingdom with His Bride – that He submitted Himself in faithful obedience to His Father, even to dying on the cross, and it is because of that faithful obedience that He was kept by the power of God in order to realize the joy to which He looked.

l). This is the pattern that has been set for us and the one that we should follow. And if we do, then in that Day the power of God will save our souls and raise us up to be glorified with Him as a joint heir, as His Bride.

Joh 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

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:

m). This whole concept, as we think about it, takes us back to that which we looked at last week and in previous weeks. As we are faithfully obedient so the Spirit of God works in us to take us from faith to faith bringing about the metamorphosis within us. This in turn transforms us from glory to glory and works in us the process of sanctification.

n). If we choose to conduct our lives in this way then the power of God through our transformation will guard us and protect us towards the salvation for which we presently labor.

o). This I hope is an enormous encouragement to us to be faithfully obedient.

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. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

7). And so we will continue next week, if the Lord is willing.