

Sunday July 4th 2010

Petros

Part Four

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 had seen last week how the mercy that marks the nature and character of God had impelled Him to bring us forth from above through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead towards a future position with Christ in His Kingdom.

b). The expression of His mercy is manifested in Christ's sacrifice on the cross as it is only through the Lord's death and shed blood that eternal salvation became possible for us and it is only through His resurrection that the Holy Spirit was sent to bring us forth from above to a living hope and to an inheritance. It is as the scriptures say – Joh 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

c). 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. 8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 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. 14 "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. 15 "All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.*

d). And our inheritance is the salvation of our soul - Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?* And rulership over the earth - Ro 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

e). It is an inheritance that has been set in place from the foundation of the world - Mt 25:34 *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'*

f). An inheritance that is pristine and pure and complete and is continually under the watchful eye of God the Father.

g). And this inheritance is for those who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

h). It is our faithful obedience, after the pattern set by the Lord, that impels the power of God to guard us and protect us towards the salvation of our soul; not removing us from the trials and tribulations of this life, but as we are faithfully obedient in the midst of them so keeping us for the conclusion to which we work. Just as with Christ, in response to His faithful obedience the power of God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at the Father's right hand, thereby keeping Him for the conclusion to which He worked – rulership in the Millennial Kingdom with His Bride; so will be God's response to our faithful obedience.

i). Then our final verse last week, v5, concluded with reference to the conclusion to which we work the salvation to be revealed in the last time.

2). Then V6 continues with this salvation, the salvation to be revealed in the last time, also as its focus - *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,*

a). It is not in the knowledge that there is a salvation in the last time that we rejoice now, although there is obviously much to be joyful about in this, but rather our verse is looking out ahead to that Day when we will receive that salvation and in that Day, having received it, we will then greatly rejoice.

b). The phrase 'greatly rejoice' is a translation of the Greek word, 'agalliao' = to jump for joy, i.e. exult:--be (exceeding) glad, with exceeding joy, rejoice (greatly).

c). And we then see in this verse a comparison between the great rejoicing that will be ours having received the salvation of our souls yet future, and our present circumstance, in the 'now' of being grieved by various trials.

d). And let's note two phrases concerning the trials in our present. They are described as 'though now for a little while', and are conditioned by, 'if need be'.

e). Now before we get over excited – the ‘little while’ here is not referring to a small period of time in the present, but should rather be seen in the context of the comparison between that Day and now, which is the focus of this verse. So, our trials now are for a little while when compared to the 1000 years of the Millennial Kingdom. It is a short time to be grieved compared with the incredible length of time in which we will greatly rejoice.

f). It is the same comparative idea that we have seen in - 2Co 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

Ro 8:18 *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

g). The phrase, ‘if need be’ may well cause us to take note as it really does mean what it says. The various trials that come into our life come as needed so to speak; and so it is perfectly possible for us to spend unspecified periods of time without trials and testing in our life. But this would be dependent on our faithful obedience. Because in our faithful obedience would be our dying to self, and in our dying to self is our suffering.

h). Our trials are described as ‘various’ – they come in a variety of shapes and forms and they may come directly from God as He attempts to teach us or discipline us or they may come from the enemy as he attempts to derail us, or as a result of our own poor choices.

3). The various trials and testing though, whatever their origin, have one purpose which is given to us in v7 - 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,*

a). The word ‘genuineness’ is a translation of the Greek ‘dokimion’ which comes from a root meaning to put someone or something to the test with a view to determining whether they or it are worthy to be approved or not, the test being made with the intention of approving if possible.

b). It is our faith then that is put to the test with the intention that our faith will be approved if possible. And again, as we have said many times before, this is not speaking of faith in the nebulous terminology of Laodicean Christianity, but ‘the faith’ – the faith that leads to the salvation of the soul - Heb 10:39 *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

c). And having this faith is much more precious than gold, even though the quality of the gold is tested and determined by fire. This is because irrespective of how valuable gold is, it will one day perish with this world and all that is in it –

2Pe 3:10 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*

d). But our faith on the other hand, if it is approved, will have age lasting and eternal value far beyond anything that gold can offer. It is our faith that will result in the salvation of our souls, a salvation that Hebrews Chapter 2 describes as ‘so great a salvation’ – the most incredible, the most superlative salvation that the all knowing, all powerful God could provide for His creation. It is our faith that will result in us being a joint heir with Christ – what possible value could we even begin to put on this faith? Perhaps in this we can hear an echo of the Lord’s words recorded in - Mt 6:19 ¶ *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

e). And if this of itself does not inspire us then the end of 1 Peter Chapter 1 v7 tells us that if our faith is approved it will be ‘found to praise, honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

f). And here at the end of this verse we find ourselves at the Judgment Seat and if we are found worthy there and our faith is approved and brought to its goal then our Lord Himself, before our peers and the multitude of angels, will praise us, honor us and clothe us with glory.

g). How can we even begin to picture such an amazing moment? Is it any wonder that we will greatly rejoice? And yet this is exactly what God promises.

h). And if possible this seems even more remarkable because of what comes next.

4). *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). Peter had seen the Lord in the flesh, he had spent 3 years with Him daily and was an eye witness of His crucifixion and His resurrection. Our eyes have physically seen none of this nor have they ever looked upon the Lord. For Peter then, because of his experience in the physical presence of the Lord – especially through his denial and restoration – we can understand how he will have come to love the Lord.

b). For us, like all those who have not seen Him, our love for Him comes only as a result of faith.

c). And if we think back to the encounter that led to Peter’s restoration we will understand what loving Him means - Joh 21:16 *He said to him again a second*

time, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love [phileo] You.*

d). Our love for the Lord then is never expressed in just emotion alone, but through our total submission to the One who is our Lord. It is just as the Lord said, Joh 14:21 *"He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

e). And of course our faithful obedience in having His commandments and keeping them would be what the testing of our faith will prove to be true.

f). None of us have physically seen the Lord and yet through the Holy Spirit, 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.*

g). Through the Holy Spirit via the word our Lord is revealed to us, yet although we glimpse His nature and character and begin to know Him, this is just a mere fraction of what we will experience when we see Him face to face – 1Co 13:12 *For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.*

h). Now we do not see Him, but in that Day we shall; now we experience Him through our faith, in that Day we shall experience Him in tangible relationship - 1Jo 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

i). And as a consequence of this we will, in that Day, rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory. It is difficult to imagine what it will be like in that Day to see Him and then to see Him beyond the events of the Judgment Seat with eyes that see with a redeemed soul completely apart from our sinful nature.

j). So again we have a comparison of time in this verse. Now we do not see Him, yet even though we don't see Him we believe, we have faith and in that faith we love Him, we have and keep His commandments. Then because of this faith continuing in the now, in that Day we will receive the end of our faith – the goal of our faith – the conclusion to which our faith in the present is to be inexorably moving – the salvation of our souls. A salvation as we have seen, that is the greatest thing that an all powerful, all knowing God could devise for His creation.

k). And here, within the historical context is the encouragement and reason for steadfastness amongst those about to face persecution and death – it is, in a nutshell, the promise of what is ahead for those who are faithfully obedient in the present, irrespective of what that present brings; and although our circumstances may be somewhat different to Peter's original readers. The same truth would hold true for us.

l). And then scripture gives us the example of what this looks like in practice

Heb 11:35.....*And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—*

m). Which is then followed by this admonition - Heb 12:1 ¶ *Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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.*

n). As we read this it might more clearly than anything else bring into focus that what awaits us in the future cannot be compared with our present suffering. – those described here in Hebrews Chapter 11 could not have endured the things they went through apart from the absolute assurance of the better resurrection that awaits them. We can see that the saving of their life in the present was of no moment compared with the life they are to receive in the age to come – Joh 12:25 *"He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 "If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.*

o). And so great is this salvation that our scripture in 1 Peter then continues as follows –

5). 1Pe 1:10 ¶ *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

a). V10 now takes us back to the OT where the prophets, whose writings make up these scriptures, had written about ‘the grace that would come to you’.

b). They searched for a precise time for this to happen and if they couldn’t find an exact time they were looking to identify a season to identify how this grace was connected to ‘the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow’.

c). And we know that the prophets wrote about ‘the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow’ as this is the very thing that the Lord draws attention to on the day of His resurrection, on the road to Emmaus - Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

d). And what they discovered as they searched is given to us in the next verse - 1Pe 1:12 *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.*

e). The things that they wrote about then concerning ‘the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow’ and the grace that would come to us, they discovered were not for themselves but for us. Something that was to be peculiar to those who would be eternally saved during this dispensation.

f). And the scripture in Hebrews describe it in this way - Heb 11:39 *And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.*

g). We should realize then that the salvation of the soul, the salvation to be revealed in the last time, is something totally unique to those who will make up the Bride of Christ.

h). That the Gentiles would be saved was common knowledge throughout the OT scriptures, but that the Gentiles would be given positions of rulership within the Kingdom alongside Israel, had, until the inception of the Church, remained a mystery - Eph 2:14 ¶ *For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,*

i). Our 1 Peter v12 scripture also tells us that the good news of this salvation and the grace that we would receive are the very things that ‘have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven’.

j). I don’t think we would need to find a clearer proof of the message taught within the church at its beginning than this. Nor do we need a clearer proof that this still remains the focus.

k). So we have seen then that so incredible is this salvation that the prophets sought to understand it, and not only this, but v12 ends with the statement, ‘things which angels desire to look into’.

l). The word ‘desire’ here is a strong word in the Greek and we might better understand it as a ‘passionate desire’.

m). ‘Look into’ = Greek – ‘parakupto’ = to bend beside, i.e. lean over (so as to peer within):--look (into), stoop down.

n). This is the same word used of Peter, John and Mary stooping down and looking into the empty tomb.

o). This word is used metaphorically ‘to look carefully into, to inspect curiously’ – and this is how it is used in this verse.

p). There is a preposition, ‘para’ prefixed to the verb here meaning ‘beside’ with the idea of separation. And so the picture we get here is of the angels peering from the outside in. They are not a part of this salvation as they are separate from it, but they have a passionate desire as observers to understand it.

q). And although our scripture says nothing about which angels we are talking about I think we would have to include all angels, even the fallen angels because of what we read in - Eph 3:8 *To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*

6). And so to briefly summarize – the salvation to be revealed in the last time, the salvation of the soul, being the most incredible thing that God could devise for His creation, was something that the prophets searched their writings to understand. What they learned from this search is that this salvation and the grace that accompanies it, was not for them, but for us – those who would make up the body of Christ from this dispensation, a group of people coming primarily from the Gentiles. So incredible is this that even the angels have a passionate desire to look into this from their position outside of it – this is the manifold wisdom of God that is being made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

a). I hope that we might once again grasp the enormity and the awesomeness of what is on offer for us.

7). And so for Peter’s original readers, and for us, what should the response be to this? Well fortunately the scripture tells us - 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."*

a). And here is the place that we shall continue from next time, if the Lord is willing.