

Sunday July 25th 2010

Petros
Part Six

1). 1Pe 1:17 *And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. 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, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 24 ¶ because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

a). The opening verses of 1 Peter Chapter 1 identified Peter's readers, and by extension ourselves, as those who had been afforded the opportunity and privilege to be the recipients of the greatest most superlative blessing that an all powerful and all knowing God could bestow upon His creation – the salvation of the soul. 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,*

b). Because of the enormity of this salvation we are then admonished to – 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). Then our opening verses today admonish us to conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here in fear, in the sure knowledge that we have been redeemed from our profitless manner of living that has been handed down from generation to generation by the incorruptible blood of Christ, 'as of a lamb

without blemish and without spot' – a substance that is of the highest possible value and worthy of the highest possible honor.

d). As if this in itself is not amazing enough v20 then goes on to tell us about the Christ whose precious blood has redeemed us - *20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you*

e). Foreordained = Greek – 'proginosko' = to designate beforehand to a position or function.

f). Then if we go to the Book of Revelation we see exactly what He was designated beforehand to do - Re 13:8b..... *Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

g). We will realize then that within the eternal council chamber of the Triune God it was designated that the second person of the Trinity, God the Son, as the Christ would be slain as the sacrifice for sin providing His own blood, a substance beyond value, as the price for redemption.

h). And when was this decision made? Well, this is even more incredible as we see the timing given as 'before the foundation of the world'.

i). Foundation = Greek – 'katabole' = to throw down

j). This word was used in secular Greek for laying the foundation of a house – In its use here in scripture we have the idea of God who transcends time and space throwing out into the void of space the universe through the action of speaking the 'word' - Ge 1:1 ¶ *In beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Joh 1:1 ¶ *In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

k). The word 'world' is the Greek word 'Kosmos', a word that describes a system set in order. And this would take us to the properly ordered arrangement that we see in Genesis 1:1 before the rebellion of Satan. This is the 'kosmos' before the chaos described in Genesis 1:2.

l). So, I am sure that we get the picture here, before God brings the 'kosmos' of Genesis 1:1 into being, before Satan is created and subsequently rebels, before the restoration of the earth, before a Man is ever created, at an unspecified time in eternity past, the Triune Godhead designated that a part of the Godhead, as the Christ, would be the sacrifice for sin. And having made this decision, from God's perspective, the Christ was already slain from that moment, so certain and so irrevocable was that decision.

m). Yet, even though this decision was absolute, it remained invisible throughout an unspecified time until – [He] *was manifest in these last times for you.*

n). The word ‘manifest’ means ‘to make or become visible’ And so it was the invisible God who in the person of His Son was made visible to His creation taking on the form of a man and coming as a Lamb without blemish or spot, to accomplish that which had been set as an absolute in ages past - Col 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

o). And this was done, according to our scripture, ‘for you’. Do you begin to see how incredible this statement is? Do you grasp the significance of it?

p). The Christ is God – God Himself came in human form to pay the price of redemption with His own precious blood, a designation that had already been irrevocably set in place in ages past, and the timing of this manifestation, which was also determined in ages past was for us. And so, before there was ever a universe God had envisaged and planned for those who would be eternally saved during this dispensation and at the same time completed His provision for those from this larger group who would choose to seek His Kingdom first – the certainty and the absoluteness of this is quite staggering and somewhat overwhelming.

q). Heb 4:3 *For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest,'" although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

r). 2Pe 1:3 *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,*

s). Ro 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

2). Our scripture continues with respect to those for whom He was manifest whom He had envisaged in ages past – 1Pe 1:21 *who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*

a). The opening of our verse, ‘who through Him believe in God’ in the original language points to the identity of those who are believers rather than the act of believing itself. And so we can understand this as, ‘who through Him are the ones who believe in God’.

b). Now those who believe here are not just those who believe there is a God, but rather those who believe God, who have faith in all that God has said and set in place, all that which we have just looked at today and all that which has been the subject of our study in past weeks. And I hope we will notice here in our scripture the connection between having our faith and hope in God and God having raised Jesus from the dead. It is as we know because of the resurrection of Christ that all scripture is validated and the Kingdom in a tangible sense becomes certain. And because of Christ’s resurrection that the Holy Spirit was sent to search out a Bride for God’s Son and guide us into all truth. And we will also remember that

Jesus said - 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.*

c). Our scripture in Peter clearly says that God raised Him from the dead, and the word dead here does not refer to the state of death, but to individuals who are dead as the word is a plural noun in the Greek original. So, the Christ was raised out from among those who are dead. They continued in that condition we call 'death', whereas the Lord has been given 'life' - Re 1:18 *"I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.*

d). And once again, here is our hope – Just as Christ was raised out from among those who were dead by God the Father in response to His faithful obedience, so will we at the Judgment Seat experience the 'out resurrection' from the dead, being taken out from amongst those Christians who are not found worthy, who will be in the condition we call 'death' for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom, whereas those of us who have been found faithful will be given life for the age to come - Php 3:10 *that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the [out] resurrection from the dead.*

e). Ro 6:5 *For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,*

f). And so because of the certainty of Christ's resurrection and all that was accomplished through that, our faith, we believe, and our hope, our assured expectation, is in the God who will do for us that which He has promised, the Christ Himself being our proof - 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.*

g). And the Holy Spirit our guarantee - Eph 1:13 *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

3). What then follows in our Peter scripture is most interesting - 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,*

a). What we must not read into this is that by purification the soul can attain some level of perfection. The salvation of the soul is something that remains yet future and comes as the conclusion of our faith, is part of our inheritance and is reserved for the last time. This is the clear evidence of scripture and is beyond dispute.

b). However, in our process to spiritual maturity our souls can become ‘purified’ in the sense that it is not our soul life that dictates our actions. We can see this presented to us this way in - Eph 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,*

c). The word translated ‘sanctify’ here is the same Greek word translated ‘purified’ in 1Peter 1:22. What we see in Ephesians is that the sanctification takes place with the washing of water by the word. Now clearly it is not our spirit that is the subject of the washing as our spirit is already completely redeemed, rather it is our manner of living, our soul life as we choose, because of the renewing of our mind, to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh.

d). Then if we go back to 1 Peter 1:22 we see that the purification has taken place in obeying the truth. Obeying the truth and the washing of water by the word are one and the same thing. This present state of ‘purification/sanctification’ because of the word will ultimately result in the salvation of the soul – 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.*

e). Here in James the laying aside ‘all filthiness and overflow of wickedness’ is the same as is meant by ‘purified’ and ‘sanctify’ – this would be exactly the same idea we saw last week in being ‘holy’ – in fact the Greek word translated ‘holy’ – ‘hagios’ is the root word for Greek, ‘hagnizo’, which is translated ‘purified’ and ‘sanctify’. It is the same thought contained in girding up the loins of our mind and not conforming to the former lusts.

f). And we cannot of course leave our scripture in James without drawing attention to v22, ‘but be doers of the word and not hearers only...’

g). And we need to draw attention to this because this is exactly what is said in 1 Peter 1:22 where having been purified has come about in ‘obeying the truth’.

h). Being a doer of the word and obeying the truth are one and the same thing, and what is implicit in both of these is consistent faithful obedience. This is a choice to faithful obedience as a committed lifestyle and can never be subject to circumstance, situation or emotion. It is a decision made by us in time past that continues into the present.

4). And if we go back to our 1 Peter 1:22 scripture again we see that Peter’s readers choice to obey the truth has resulted in ‘sincere love of the brethren’. And what is implied in this is that there was a time when they did not have a sincere love of the brethren.

a). So, what exactly does sincere love of the brethren mean and if they are already loving the brethren with sincerity why is this then followed by the command to love one another fervently?

b). Well the word translated ‘sincere’ is the Greek word, ‘anupokritos’ = without dissimulation (hypocrisy), unfeigned.

c). It is a compound word made up of the negative particle, ‘a’ and the word from which we get our English word hypocrite – ‘hupokrinomai’. This word was used of an actor on the Greek stage, one who played the part of another. The word literally means ‘to judge under’ and was used of someone making judgment from behind a screen or mask.

d). And so we can see then that before some of Peter’s readers chose to consistently obey the truth they were passing negative judgments on others of their brethren whilst wearing the mask of loving them. And the negative judgment is not necessarily verbal, although it certainly could have been as this is addressed at the start of Chapter 2, but it can also be expressed through association.

e). 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.*

f). There is an implication in this verse that some of Peter’s readers were still associating with the ‘Gentiles’ and their way of life as Peter points out that enough time has been spent in the past doing that, and now it needs to be different. And so to tie these two things together – whilst meeting with the brethren there would be a pretense of wanting to be in this company, but outside of gathering together they preferred to associate with those from their past way of life and this of itself shows a negative judgment on their brothers and sisters in Christ. For ourselves then we could see that who we choose to spend our time with may be a good indicator of the sincerity of the love we have of our brethren.

g). Another potentially non verbal negative judgment that we find in scripture is also one of association, but on this occasion expressed through partiality - Jas 2:1 ¶ *My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, 3 and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?*

h). And again it would be very easy to see here that giving particular attention to someone because of their social standing demonstrates insincerity when it comes to our love of the brethren as a whole.

i). Now it would be true to say that the demarcation between the privileged and the underprivileged in Peter's day would be stark, and not something we would necessarily see in our own midst. However it remains something for us to be acutely aware of as we consider our associations amongst ourselves and amongst the other groups of believers with whom we have relationship.

j). And so we might conclude from this that the sincere love of the brethren has to do with taking delight in and wanting to be around those who are like minded in their pursuit of the Kingdom with us.

k). And the first word translated 'love' in v22 is the Greek, 'phileo' – it is that love of liking and personal affection that we had seen in the account of Peter's restoration at the end of John's gospel.

l). We are therefore to relate to one another with unfeigned personal affection as we like what and who our brothers and sisters in Christ are; we want to have as our company those who are engaged with us in like manner in the race of faith. We take delight in them and rejoice over them. This is not scripture, but the old adage, 'birds of a feather flock together' would give a good insight into this.

m). And just so that we don't miss it, this sincere personal affection of the brethren comes only through the purification of consistent, lifestyle, faithful obedience. Without that we won't even relate to each other on the ground floor, so to speak. Faithful obedience once more is the key.

5). 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,*

a). So, what about the command in the second half of our verse – love one another fervently with a pure heart?

b). Well let's follow the sequence – the scripture says, 'since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth' - this is a past action with the present consequence of having sincere [phileo] love of the brethren – since this is already in place; then God expects us to go to the next level – 'love [agape] one another fervently with a pure heart'.

c). And here of course we now see the self sacrificing, unconditional love which Christ has shown to us.

d). This immediately takes us to become practitioners of the nature and character of God - 1Jo 4:8 *He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.*[agape]

e). And to the practical definition of agape/love as given in – 1Co 13:4 ¶ *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

f). And of course what prevails, that makes it possible for us to love like this is our faithful obedience to the word - 2Co 3:18 *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

g). Our proper engagement with the word through faithful obedience, by the transforming work of the Spirit, transforms us into the image of the One we behold there whose very nature and character is agape/love.

h). Our scripture also tells us that this love is reciprocal, we are to love one another in this way; and that it is to be fervent.

i). Fervent = Greek – ‘ektenos’ = with maximum effort without ceasing.

j). And the words, ‘with a pure heart’ are literally, ‘out of a pure heart’. It is then the heart that is pure, that is purified that can love like this. So how is our heart purified? Well we have already seen this today – in obedience to the truth.

6). 1Pe 1:23 *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

a). And so we are to love one another fervently out of a pure heart because we have been born again by incorruptible seed through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

b). And again we see the comparison here between the corruptible, that which is passing away and the incorruptible, that which lives and abides forever.

c). And again, just as we saw in the same comparison made between the coins of silver and gold and the precious blood of Christ, it is only that which endures forever that has any real value.

d). And just as we saw in v3 some weeks ago our being ‘born again’, brought forth from above, has nothing to do with our eternal salvation but with the transforming work of the Spirit as He opens the word to our understanding. The imagery here should be very clear for us – the word of God is like a seed that has been planted in us for the purpose of growing and thereby producing fruit. And as the word of God and the Spirit of God are one and the same then agape/ love will be a fruit of the Spirit - Ga 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*

e). 1Co 13:13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

f). The faith that we have to the saving of the soul will at the soul’s salvation pass away; that which is our hope will also be realized and therefore will no longer be hope; but the agape/love that is brought forth from above through our faithful obedience is the greatest of these because it never fails – not now, not during the Millennial Kingdom and not during the ages of eternity to come.

g). Nor could it fail because those found worthy at the Judgment Seat will once again be in the image and likeness of God, and as we have already seen today, 'God is love..'

7). And so our first Chapter of 1 Peter concludes by drawing from Isaiah Chapter 40 v6-8 - 1Pe 1:24 ¶ *because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, 25 But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

a). And again here we have the comparison between that which is transitory and that which endures forever.

b). Isaiah 40:6-8 is in a context that deals with Israel's restoration within the Millennial Kingdom and so the use of these verses takes us beyond the obvious that we all have a body of flesh that exists for a very short time and then disappears, to the overthrow of Gentile world power and the end of Man's Day with all its accomplishments, with the coming of the everlasting Word whose Kingdom shall fill the whole earth, whose purpose is unalterably established.

c). It is this Word – the Christ and the coming of His Kingdom which by the good news was preached.

d). And again for Peter's original readers and for us, the focus of our lives is not to be on the here and now which is passing away, but on that which will never pass away - 1Jo 2:17 *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

e). Da 2:34 *"You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 "Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold-the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."*

e). Re 11:15 *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"*