

Sermon: The Coming Salvation

Text: [I Peter 1:3-12 ESV](#)

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

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

[I Peter 1:1-2 \(ESV\)](#) ¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

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

Peter says there are reasons to praise God even in the midst of current conditions:
I. Our Future Reward Is Secure (vv. 3-5).

[I Peter 1:3-5 \(ESV\)](#) ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

We have evidences to the fact our future reward is secure:

A. God has given us new birth.

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

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

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

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

Another part of this sureness is:

B. God is guarding our inheritance.

Not just anyone, but God is responsible for our inheritance. In the OT the idea of inheritance was connected to the Promised Land of Canaan ([Deuteronomy 15:4](#)); now, though, it is eternal life in heaven with the Heavenly Father; His Son, Jesus; and the Holy Spirit and all his angels. There is no comparison between the earthly land of Canaan and the eternal city of God - the new Jerusalem. Some day our new residence will be perfect and permanent. In contrast then, heaven “is untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time.” (Beare). You will never have to say again in heaven: “I don’t have the time.”

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

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

“If the idea of your future inheritance in heaven doesn’t affect you as you face present problems, one of two things may be true: You may not truly be saved; or, you may be saved, but you may, to some degree, be buying into an improper form of Christianity that puts the emphasis on just the “here and now” rather than on our eternal salvation. The Western Church has ignored her purpose and the very people who are the mission field. We have come to believe that the church is about us. We play it safe because nobody wants to be labeled a fanatic or intolerant.

Reverend Ike used to say crassly, ‘I don’t want my pie in the sky when I die; I want cash in the stash here and now.’ You still hear that kind of stuff today. But most of us aren’t that blatant. What I do find is many are into Christianity for what it can do for them now. Heaven is a nice extra, but they want the good life now! If Christ isn’t going to give it to them, and fairly soon, they shop elsewhere for a new Benefactor. The Government, Education and Social Media Platforms are quickly trying to replace the Savior, but offering nothing but a new kind of slavery and a less-than-loving master. Some come to Christ because they hear that God has a wonderful plan for their lives. What they didn’t understand was God’s wonderful plan often means enjoying the riches of Christ in the midst of suffering and perhaps even martyrdom now.

Suppose you were standing in a long line at the bank and I came running in, grabbed you by the arm, jerked you out of line, and dragged you outside. You’d probably be a bit upset. You’d say, “What do you think you’re doing? You made me lose my place in line, you made me look like a fool in front of all those people, and you hurt my arm!” You wouldn’t appreciate what I had done. But what if some terrorists had just come into the bank who intended to take everyone hostage and to kill hostages every few minutes if their demands were not met? If I rescued you from that awful hell, you wouldn’t complain about losing your place in line or looking like a fool or your sore arm. You’d be grateful to me in spite of any inconvenience or pain, because I rescued you from a terrible death.”

adapted from Steven Cole

As Christians, I fear that we’ve gotten far away from this eternal perspective. We need to keep the long view of things in mind and have faith. God always has our best interest in mind. Knowing our future reward is secure should help to bring peace into our sometimes troubled and worried daily lives. We know through faith:

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

I Peter 1:6-9 (ESV) 6 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Our present reward is secure, and it is good to know that our present trials are only temporary. The text says: “for a little while.”

A. Grief will not last forever.

The troubles and griefs of this world are wiped away just like the tears from our eyes that God removes. Peter is no “pie in the sky” preacher. He understands full well what life may hold for us. Life is not always a bed of roses - and even roses have hurtful thorns. He never promises, nor does our Lord, there will be no storms or difficulties in our lives. Our loved ones will die, jobs will be lost, marriages may dissolve, children may disappoint, we may fail, but there is One who will never fail us. Peter understands quite well life’s circumstances can create grief.

But rather than becoming a pessimist like one who is always bemoaning his fate, Peter says that:

B. Present trials may even be helpful.

Our text clearly points out trials can prove faith to be genuine. The Scripture says that we who follow Jesus are rich. Our faith is worth more than gold. But even gold just like faith must go through refining. These trials of faith, that Peter says will most certainly come, do not create faith, but show it for what it is: either counterfeit or genuine. (**Illus.** of tempered steel/oil bath/screeching sound/7-8 times stronger).

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

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

You remember Thomas after the resurrection and how he doubted Jesus was alive. Jesus appeared in a house that had locked doors. **John 20:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

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

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

I Peter 1:10-12 (ESV) ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, ¹¹ inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

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

A. The prophets helped us find salvation.

They intensely listened for God, diligently searched for God, and God found them and used them to prepare people (Jew and Gentile) for the coming of Jesus. The Apostle Peter, as he preaches the Pentecost sermon that initiates the Church, quotes Joel and the Psalms written by David and inspired by God. The response was that thousands of people came to faith that day. A foundation was laid by:

B. Those who have preached by the Holy Spirit

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

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

Acts 10:39-48 (ESV) ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” ⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. **(also Philip with the Ethiopian official in Acts 8:26-39)**

There has been a deafness to the Word even after the resurrection. Everyone has his/her own idea of who God is, and what He is offering. You might remember Jesus tried to clear it up for those men on the road to Emmaus. **Luke 24:25-27 (ESV)** ²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

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

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

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

So God has always been working, wanting everyone to be saved.

And salvation can be found in no other person than Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

The Old Testament prophets encouraged people to look for a coming Messiah. Now that Jesus has come and fulfilled that prophecy, we await His next and final coming when everything will be found to be perfect for those who have been obedient and put their faith in Him.

In this opening section of **I Peter** it says that our salvation even makes the angels envious. Though life may be difficult now or in the future, life can still be good!

Why? Because at the end of everything, God is waiting for His faithful children, and someday we will live with Him forever: in heaven!