

HOPE
IN FUTURE
GLORY



*A Study in
1 Peter*

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TOM NETTLES
& SYLVIA NETTLES DICKSON



FOUNDERS

MINISTRIES

CAPE CORAL, FLORIDA

***Hope in Future Glory:
A Study in 1 Peter***

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DEDICATION

*To the men and women who serve Christ by living out
the gospel before the young people at French Camp
Academy, a Christian home and school in Mississippi
where my husband and I had the privilege of serving.*

Sylvia Dickson

*To the memory of all my Sunday School teachers
from nursery through high school whose dedication
to their call and love for Christ and His Word
fastened me to the rock of Scripture.*

Tom Nettles

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This Study Guide on 1 Peter developed from a discipline of producing week-by-week notes on the Lifeway “Explore the Bible” curriculum. Following their purpose of going through the Bible once every seven years proved to prompt an edifying discipline of close contextual Bible study for me. This commentary is an expansion of those original Sunday Bible study notes through the years. I asked my sister, Sylvia Nettles Dickson, whose personal devotion to Scripture and practical insight have often encouraged me, to join this effort with her linguistic energy and love for growth under the power of truth. We thank Founders Press for undertaking the publishing of this study guide and pray for its usefulness by God’s providence and for his glory.

TOM J. NETTLES



Introduction

When one examines the preparation and natural qualifications of Paul, the intellectual power and canonical coherence of his doctrinal exposition are not surprising. Introduced in Scripture as a zealous leader of persecution, and having witnessed Stephen's vision of Christ, his own confrontation with the risen Lord—as one “born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8 NKJV)—immediately altered his entire orientation to Scripture. “Immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God’” (Acts 9:20). His autobiographical description of having advanced “in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people,” combined with his zeal “for the traditions of my fathers” (Gal. 1:14), sets the stage for profound scriptural interaction and revelational receptivity.

His personal description—“concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church” (Phil. 3:5–6)—mixed with the status of being considered blameless by his peers produce a doctrinal, moral, and intellectual texture to his pivotal discussions of law and gospel and justification by faith (Phil. 3:4–9). Much had to be destroyed, but much remained—necessarily altered radically by grace—for his knowledge and his labors. His own testimony that he “worked harder than any

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of them” (1 Cor. 15:10) shows his self-conscious determination to give himself to the cause of God and truth. In all of this, however, he knew that the entire combination of training, native zeal, Scripture knowledge, and apostolic gifting was of the grace of God (Gal. 1:14–16). Providence prepared him, grace renewed him, and revelation informed him for his amazing “career” as an apostle. Peter himself recognized Paul’s advanced stage of wisdom and complexity in the truths of redemptive revelation (2 Peter 3:15–16).

On the other hand, Peter’s first appearance on the pages of the New Testament hardly gives rise to an expectation that he would be the author of such a book as his first letter. Peter’s letter is filled with beautiful language, transporting concepts of present grace and future hope, present sufferings and future triumphant glory, tender mercies and invincible determination, and humble submission and confident dominion. He is receptive to reproach and assertive of victory. His language, even in the ambience of the text, shows an irenic embracing of death in anticipation of resurrection. The writing of the fisherman is gripping in simple beauty and superlative in theological symmetry and integration. Who would have thought it?

We first find him tending fishing nets after a frustrating night of catching no fish (Matt. 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:3–4). At the miracle of netting an unmanageable multitude of fish on the gentle command, almost a suggestion, of Jesus (Luke 5:8–9), Peter is overwhelmed to the point of worship.

Peter walked to Jesus on the water, but sank at the sight of the waves (Matt. 14:28–31), and then received a mild rebuke at his faltering faith. He confessed that Jesus was indeed the Christ (Matt. 16:16). Jesus then pointed to the gracious miracle of revealed truth that had just come to Peter as the very

faith upon which the company of the redeemed, the church, would be built (Matt. 16:18–19). When Jesus followed this with an explanation of the events necessary to make such a company possible, Peter assumed an authoritative air and disputed with Jesus about the prediction of rejection and death. Peter descended from the elevation of receiving an epitome of revealed truth from the Father Himself to the worldly, reactionary banality of thoughtless reaction. Jesus carefully instructed His disciples on this matter, and Peter audaciously took Jesus aside and began to rebuke Him (Matt. 16:21–22). Just think! Peter rebuked Jesus for His revelation to them of the precise reason for the entire transaction of virgin conception to resurrection. Jesus, with an immediacy and sternness deserved by the moment, rebuked Peter (Matt. 16:23) as one deceived by Satan’s initial lie: “You will not surely die” (Gen. 3:4).

Peter paid the temple tax with a coin plucked from the mouth of a fish (Matt. 17:25–27). Jesus responded to one of Peter’s questions by teaching about the necessity of forgiving others based on God’s forgiving us (Matt. 18:21–22). Peter saw Jesus glorified while speaking with Moses and Elijah, and clumsily suggested making tabernacles for all three (Matt. 17:1–5; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36).

Peter proclaimed that he would never stumble on account of Jesus, but then slept as Jesus prayed the prayer unto death (Matt. 26:31, 40–41; Mark 14:29, 37; Luke 22:33, 46). Peter sought to defend Jesus from arrest with a bold slice of his sword, but then denied knowing Jesus at the question of a servant girl (Matt. 26:51, 69–70; Mark 14:47, 66–68; Luke 22:50, 56–57). Peter received particular attention and a precise call from the resurrected Christ, but sought to deflect attention from himself to John (John 21:15–22).

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Given these polarities of confident devotion and fearful intimidation, would one see Peter as the proclaimer of Pentecost? Would he be given the task of preaching the first Christian sermon? As a manifestation of grace to sinners, spiritually generated boldness, and the overpowering wisdom of divine revelation, Peter told the audience of the first Christian sermon—those who had crucified Jesus and intimidated Peter—“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2:23–24).

When the Sadducees complained about Peter preaching “in Jesus the resurrection from the dead” (Acts 4:2), they had him arrested and detained. Peter, “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 4:8), told them that salvation was in “no other name under heaven given among men” (Acts 4:12). Later, when commanded to preach about Jesus no more, Peter responded respectfully but with unwavering conviction that he must preach “what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). He could not obey men instead of God when God had commissioned him to preach the gospel of Jesus (Acts 4:19).

In the expanding circumference of gospel power and inclusion, Peter saw Samaritans converted and manifest the evidence of receiving the Spirit. Also, Peter severely reprimanded Simon Magus for his effort to buy the gift of granting the Spirit, saying, “Your heart is not right before God” (Acts 8:21). Beyond the Samaritans and into the gentiles, Peter was taught by God Himself of the universal intention of the new covenant in its redemptive purpose (Acts 10:28, 44–48).

Even after this, Peter had another fall from courage, stumbling from the fear of man. Paul records it in Galatians 2:11–14. Peter felt the disapproving glare of the circumcision party of Jewish Christians while in Antioch. He drew away, therefore, from the gentiles when the Jerusalem cohort appeared. Paul saw what was happening and quickly confronted Peter for acting out of “step with the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:14). Jews, who had the privilege and advantage of the law of righteousness revealed, nevertheless needed Christ’s own righteousness for justification. It is the same with the gentiles; both Jews and gentiles find righteousness in the obedience and blood of Christ, and nowhere else.

Peter had learned this lesson through an intense educational process under the clarity of divine pedagogy. Now, with the undiluted conviction of Pauline apostolicity, he again feels its pertinence and moral power. He would never again waver on this, but would be able to write at the end of this extended exposition of the Trinity’s purpose and power in salvation, “This is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it” (1 Peter 5:12).

The existence of this letter bears testimony to the transforming nature of saving grace in its author’s heart and mind, as well as in his teaching. Also, its content proves the intellectual efficacy of divine revelation. Its admonitions illustrate the theme of tested and authenticated faith. Its propositions press the reader into eternal realms of beauty while recognizing the present order of trial and opposition. Its relevance will never be exhausted. Therefore, use it to “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen” (2 Peter 3:18).

Themes to Enjoy

In this letter from Peter, its present-day recipients (just like its original Christian exiles) may find a profound and pleasing interweaving of several themes. You will discover more than what we list here, but here are a few.

One, Peter is conscientious about integrating the foundation of a Trinitarian work of grace throughout his letter in its various themes. This begins in 1 Peter 1:2 and is repeated in verse three. It is the driving force of 1:19–23 and caps off the letter in 5:10–11. The power of this theme is pervasive.

Without embarrassment or apology, Peter informs his readers of the probability of suffering for Christ in this life. He does not present it in a morose fashion or see it as an occasion for lament, but rather sees it as an occasion for joy in the imitation of Christ. This theme appears in 1:6 and 2:19–21. Again, in 4:16 and 5:9–10, the universal experience of suffering for righteousness' sake is a part of the tapestry of Peter's narrative.

Suffering is not accidental, but arises from the sovereignty of God in arranging occasions for suffering. "If necessary" he says in 1:6 and "according to God's will" in 4:19. Peter calls suffering in patience a "gracious thing" in 2:19–20 and indicates that endurance in unjust suffering is a grace to which "you have been called" (2:21). Peter sees it as specified by "God's will" in 3:17.

To manifest the sustaining power of God through these trials is one element of the divine rationale for decreeing them. These trials help the Christian pilgrims to set their hope "fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:13). They show that we are "guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1:5).

These God-ordained sufferings help us honor Christ as Lord and prepare our minds for a defense of our sustaining hope (3:15). They show that the God of all grace will “restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you” (5:10).

Peter argues that trials not only prove the sustaining power of God, but they also show one’s faith to be genuine (1:7). Suffering in the same commitment to the divine will as Christ did is evidence that the “Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (4:14).

How fitting, in light of Peter’s rebuke of Christ in Matthew 16, that he has a major emphasis on the redemptive suffering of Christ. The entire pilgrimage of saints in a fallen and hostile world is set up by the will of the triune God executed through “obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood” (1:2). They were “ransomed” (1:18) with the “precious blood of Christ” (1:19). He wants the truth emblazoned in their consciences that “Christ also suffered for you,” bearing our “sins in his body on the tree,” dying once for all for sin as a righteous man for unrighteous men (2:21, 24; 3:18). Because Christ’s suffering was in our stead, His death constitutes salvation, and in this way provides the example of suffering according to the will of God, even though it is unjust within the framework of humanity.

Peter’s instruction arises from his personal witness to these events and the revelation of their meaning to him in his apostolic office (1:11–12). He was a “witness of the sufferings of Christ” (5:1). In explanation, affirmation, postulation, and assertion, Peter wrote as one whose knowledge was certain, given to him by the merciful and gracious concern of God for the exiled people. On this earth and away from their final and eternal home in heaven with the Father, and the Spirit, and the

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resurrected Son, they need guidance from above—truths upon which their souls can be nourished during the spiritual famine of this world. Peter the impulsive, Peter the inconsistent, Peter the peculiarly commissioned was granted the revelation from God to serve as a guide to the chosen people in their wilderness journey through this world to the final, true, and eternal promised land (2:9–12).

Peter employs the theme of Christian graces. How should Christians conduct themselves toward one another and toward the world? The molding power of grace transforms character in light of the rapidly approaching personal presence of Christ, either by death or by His return (4:7–11).

Peter gave the letter a permeating incense of righteous living. The expression of Christian morality based on Christ's perfection and the strength of the law creates a disposition to "die to sin and live to righteousness" (2:24). Sojourners must recognize the shortsightedness and destructive character of giving oneself over to worldly, unlawful passions (2:11–12; 4:1–6). Since holiness sustained Christ in His obedience, holiness is engendered by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, holiness establishes the vibrantly joyful atmosphere of heaven, and holiness is a summation of the eternal character of God, then the Christian must see the grace of the command, "You shall be holy, for I am holy" (1:16).


1 PETER 1:1-12



The Fullness of the Redemptive Work Announced

- I. Peter Greets His Readers as “An Apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1–2)
 - A. In 2 Peter he adds “a servant,” or bonds slave (2 Peter 1:1).


Apostolic authority was extremely important for the true knowledge of Christ, and the gospel depended on the reality of divinely revealed propositions of truth. Paul used the term everywhere except in Philippians (“servants”), 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians (where he names his coworkers), and Philemon (“prisoner”). The apostolic office was the first and most authoritative gift Christ gave the church in His ascension (1 Cor. 12:28; Gal. 1:16–17; 2:8; Eph. 4:11; Col. 4:16–18; 1 Thess. 2:3–8, 13; Heb. 2:3–4; Jude 17–18). The apostles saw the risen Lord, were given a special commission from Him, were promised the revealing operations of the Spirit for their teaching ministry, and had confirming manifestations of power (2 Cor. 12:12). It was important that these churches knew of Peter’s apostolic status.

 *Sylvia's Comments:* Peter was first known as Simon, and seems to have been quite an impetuous rascal. He and his brother, Andrew, were fishermen on Lake Galilee when Jesus called them to become “fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19). Peter had quite a common beginning for someone who became the first of Jesus’s disciples and an apostle, a writer of Scripture, a church leader, and a martyr for being a Christ follower.

Christ changed Simon’s name to Peter, meaning “the rock.” Although Peter didn’t always appear to be as steady as a rock, he was “foreknown” to be a pillar of the church. Here he confirms his calling as an apostle, and is in the role of church-encourager, teacher, and admonisher. This letter was probably written from Rome (1 Peter 5:13) around AD 62.

B. Peter addresses Christians who have been dispersed throughout Asia Minor because of a flurry of persecution.

Although Peter is the apostle to the circumcised, internal evidence indicates that he addresses not only Jewish Christians, but also those who had formerly lived their lives thoroughly immersed in a particularly debased gentile culture (4:3–6). Even though they are in an exiled situation, Peter reminded them that their position is not thereby uncertain, for in the purpose of God, they are elect (1:1).

 *Sylvia's Comments:* About two hundred years before Christ, Israelites were dispersed across the known world, but they were not necessarily believers. Peter is probably writing to Christians who had been forced to leave Jerusalem and Rome because of persecution. No matter when they were scattered from home, he is writing to believers. Christians are

God's elect and the world's rejects. They left property, family, and heritage to worship as Christians without fear for their lives. This "dispersion," as it is called, will spread the gospel seed to many other places, where it will grow and flourish. Romans 8:28 tells us that God uses all things for good for His chosen people, and this is one great example.

-
- C. This election proceeds in an orderly and certain fashion from the divine foreknowledge to the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit in setting them apart for faith in Jesus, particularly in relation to His shedding His blood for them.

The salvation of God's elect is a fully Trinitarian salvation proceeding from the one God who lives eternally as a three-personed Being. This God-in-three-persons covenanted to bring salvation to sinners, with each person performing those aspects of the work peculiarly appropriate to His distinctive personal properties and relation within the triune God.

1. "According to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Foreknowledge does not mean only precognition, but also an unchangeable divine affection, the kind of affection given peculiarly to one who is particularly loved. See its use in 1:20 where it obviously means an eternal and purposefully productive love concerning the Son of God, who would take to Himself our nature in order to be the Christ. It is also used in a chain of issues concerning God's eternal purpose (Rom. 8:26), a purpose founded in foreknowledge and ending in glorification. That foreknowledge is God's setting His heart upon

certain persons beforehand. The outflowing of love as an originating power is peculiarly reflective of the Father's properties and the eternal fountain of the love intrinsic to the persons of Son and Spirit and characteristic of the divine essence.

2. "Sanctification of the Spirit." The Spirit sets apart those who are foreloved and chosen by the Father. This setting apart involves the threefold operation of convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8–9). The Spirit accompanied the preached word with a special power (cf. 1 Thess. 1:4–5) and granted the new birth to these chosen ones. This operation implies a full and eternal accord with the Father's will and love.
3. "For obedience to Jesus Christ." This is faith in Christ, but is called obedience because true faith always contains in it the recognition of and submission to divine authority. Note 1 Peter 1:21, which emphasizes belief and faith, followed immediately by 1:22, which states that the new birth purifies the soul by "obedience to the truth." Note also 2:6–8, in which belief is set opposite of disobedience to the Word. See also 1:9 and 1:14 for the interchangeableness, in Peter's vocabulary, of faith and obedience (cf. 3:1).
4. "And for sprinkling with his blood." Note the references to Christ's blood/death in 1:11, 19; 2:21–24; 3:18; 4:1, 13; and 5:1. This phrase would be particularly striking to dispersed Jews, for they are thereby reminded that Passover and the Day of Atonement have been fulfilled once and for all by the Lamb

(1:19) that was slain, Christ Jesus Himself. His suffering, His death, was truly substitutionary. He took death for us. To be sprinkled with His blood means that it is peculiarly and certainly efficacious for those to whom it is applied.

5. Peter adds this capstone of “grace and peace” under the assumption that God’s elect will find this divine kindness multiplied, taking on proportions of an ever-increasing abundance. Grace and peace will be sufficient for each day and situation in this fallen world in our unending battles with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Moreover, in heaven, these blessings will be absolutely unhindered by any opposition, but will still be multiplied unendingly. God remains infinite, and even in heaven we are finite, so these blessings from the triune God may increase by multiplication forever. “Grace and peace” provide a summary of the statements given just above concerning God’s purpose in saving a people. Grace relates to the whole of what flows from election, and peace relates to reconciliation by the blood of Christ and peace of conscience from the call and sanctifying operation of the Spirit.



Sylvia’s Comments: Even this hard providence was planned before creation. The Father’s eternal plan, to show His holiness, grace, justice, and love to all creation, cannot be changed by man’s actions. In fact, man’s actions are part of this plan. God’s foreknowledge doesn’t mean that He’s looking at creation from a distance. He is actively directing every thought, word, and action.

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The Holy Spirit is transforming sinners who are chosen to be God's people, called out of Satan's evil dungeon and transferred to the kingdom of light in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:13). The Spirit breathed life into us who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Light flooded our minds and hearts to show us Christ, and He gave us a hunger and thirst for truth and love. We were given the ability to hear the Father, to worship Him, and to live eternally with Him, all through the obedience of Christ to Him, even to death.

We have been chosen by and restored to the Father and have been given life by the Spirit for obedience to Christ. We are permanently cleansed from our sin by His blood, as other Bible passages say. As we go through trials, persecutions, and death, the Holy Spirit continually sprinkles us (metaphorically) with Christ's faith-sustaining, life-giving, ever-effective blood.

Our triune God is acknowledged and credited here. Working in complete agreement, God, in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—delights in choosing and restoring.

After pointing out their common experience and state of being chosen by the Father in Christ, exiled by the world, and being sanctified, or changed, to be like Christ, Peter exuberantly heaps on grace and peace. This blessing comes straight from God because only God can provide the grace and peace that calms us no matter our circumstances. Peter's blessing is not for a sprinkle, but for a cloudburst of grace and peace.

II. Peter's Energetic Benediction (1 Peter 1:3–5)

Peter gives an energetic benediction to the Father, specifically as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other God than this one who identifies Himself in such a

way. This passage is filled with the initiative and power of God and the blessings that His foreknowing love has prepared for us.



Sylvia's Comments: This is great! Peter is calling for praise so loud that it drowns out everything else. God, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has invited us boldly to approach His throne, being confident that He hears us. The priests of the Old Testament, but not the rest of Israel, were privileged to go into the holy places. Certain people had access, and others were kept at a distance. Here Peter is telling us that we can enter God's presence with praise because the Father has opened the door.

In John's gospel, Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again—of the Spirit—in order to enter God's kingdom (John 3:6–7). Peter expands on that to say that we are born through God's mercy into a living hope, the eternal kingdom of God. As Christ was resurrected from utter death, we are given life because of Christ's death and resurrection. As He joined us in death, we join Him in life. Christ is our only hope, and He is vibrant, radiant, and inexhaustible—our eternal flame of hope—the lamp in God's kingdom (Rev. 21:23).

A. Look at the assertions of divine initiative.

If God has used their circumstances to this point to work in them the eternal plan of grace that He determined for them, they do not need to fear any temporal circumstance. It is under the beneficent providence of God. As He has used their situation to work His plan of grace and peace to this point, so He will continue to do. Mercy denotes that God withholds a punitive strike

from His rod of just wrath. This is wholly upon divine prerogative, not at all deserved by the recipients of such kindness. Ephesians 2:4 and Titus 3:5 affirm that God is “rich in mercy” and views the entire scheme of a sinner’s redemption and justification occurring “according to his great mercy” (1 Peter 1:3).


1. “He has caused.” Though not mentioned in person, this refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3, 5), who is the author of this new birth (1 Peter 1:23, the “imperishable” seed). This is the Spirit’s covenantal operation effecting the electing prerogative of the Father.
2. “Kept.” The inheritance already is in heaven, kept for us by God. He Himself guards it, for it consists of a believer’s union with the love and glory intrinsic to the triune God, and thus it is as “kept” as God’s own character is “kept.” It is “kept” because it involves a promise from the one who cannot lie to His Son as He represented all of His people in the covenant of redemption (Titus 1:1–2).
3. “By God’s power are being guarded through faith.” God is the one who initiates faith, and He preserves it in the elect (Eph. 2:8; Phil. 1:6). Because of this, they are “believers.” His power manifests itself peculiarly in this, that He maintains in them their desire for union with Him (cf. Phil. 2:12–13).
4. “Ready to be revealed.” The time of the culmination and completion of this saving work of the triune God is the “last time.” When the preordained critical time

arrives, the full glory of that salvation will come in as a flood unveiled by the Father's good pleasure.

B. Look at the blessings.

1. "New birth and living hope." The new birth is not only a change of heart and nature, but it is also the introduction of its recipient into a new eschatological order. Christ's resurrection infuses hope into the experience so that our true home, the new location of our affections, is the coming manifestation of the rule of Jesus Christ.
2. "Inheritance." While any earthly condition can change and any earthly home can be destroyed, and while we may be driven from all temporal security by earthly disaster or hostility, nothing can destroy the eternal home. Look at the words and relish them, enjoy them, and note their true glory and infinite durability: "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading." Not only shall *we* not perish, but the things that God has prepared for us shall not perish. They are all overflows of His own rich beauty and glory that can never perish. They are undefiled. All earthly things, no matter how relatively pure, are defiled. This inheritance partakes of the divine nature, again as an overflow of His goodness, and is defiled by nothing; it is utterly pure. And none of the intrinsic qualities and satisfying beauties ever diminish or lose their intense allurements, for they are unfading.
3. "A salvation." Scripture consistently uses the nomenclature of *salvation* and *saved* for the experience of

deliverance from sin, corruption, and condemnation into a state of favor with God (e.g., Eph. 2:8; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5; John 3:17). Salvation is a deliverance from a state of wrath and an entrance into a state of divine favor. Even now, “He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). The fullness of the results of this deliverance and the beginning of the experience of unalloyed joy in the presence of divine favor is at the “last time.”

 *Sylvia's Comments:* Our new birth puts us in line for an incorruptible, indestructible, solvent, fresh family inheritance. It doesn't depend on the wavering stock market, the gold standard, or trendy values. We have no earthly idea how much it is worth, but its value will boggle the mind. I believe we will be amazed at the brilliance, beauty, and value of Christ, the Trinity, and the new creation when it comes, and will have a new, unwavering assurance of God's unimaginable love.


Peter refers several times to perishable and imperishable things: Our inheritance through faith will not be corrupted; we were not purchased with perishable things such as silver and gold (1 Peter 1:18); His seed for our salvation cannot be cast aside or be unfruitful (vv. 23–24); Christ is the eternal, precious, living stone and we are like living stones being built into an imperishable spiritual dwelling (2:4–9).

Our Father, the creator of all things, is making sure that we, who live by faith in Christ, know we are protected by His love in this world. He shields

us from eternal death and His wrath by His power so that when salvation is fulfilled at the end of time, we who are dressed in righteousness that has been given to us by Christ will enter His holy presence and live there eternally.

III. Present Joy in the Midst of Trials (1 Peter 1:6–7)

The prospect of this final salvation gives a present joy, even though our experience here also includes many trials. Trials *now* only increase the intensity of our joy *then*.

 *Sylvia's Comments:* Peter is not without sympathy. He has received his share of beatings, mockeries, imprisonments, etc., so he can relate to the sadness, anger, losses, and hopeless feelings they had and that we all have at times. He's pointing out that believers are shielded by God's power no matter what happens.

Trials, grief, and suffering only show how true and real our faith in Christ is. How do we know if our faith is real when everything is A-OK? However, when challenges come and we might lose something if we stand for Christ, what will we do? Those personal, family, financial, or health losses will show where we stand—not to mention beatings, torture, threats of imprisonment, or death.

Our inheritance waits in heaven. Christians are encouraged to look at the various hurts and losses as God's way of helping us let go of what we think is so important here so that we can fully enjoy that inheritance. If our faith is true, then no matter what we lose now, we'll be filled with praise, joy, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ returns at

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the end of time. We will enjoy a full face-to-face relationship with Jesus, which is worth more than silver or gold.

A. “Though now for a little while, if necessary.”

However long this life is, it is only a little while. And while we are here, it is often necessary to have our comfort with this world and our attachment to it challenged, or even taken from us. We must be taught to “not love the world or the things in the world” (1 John 2:15). We must learn not to store up treasures on earth “where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matt. 6:19–20).

B. “The tested genuineness of your faith.”

This can also be stated as “the proving of your faith.” The things that God does to demonstrate that our faith is real give a luster to the element of genuineness. Peter emphasizes here not that faith is more precious than gold, but that its “testedness” is more precious than gold. That which gives faith its true shine and removes all the earthly cling-ons is the process of trial that unveils its genuineness.

C. “May be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The approvedness of faith flames out into praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This will show that the sacrifice of Christ is really worth more than all the world, and it would profit a man nothing if he gained the whole world but lost his soul (Matt. 16:26). Approved faith will lead in the bending of knees to Jesus as Lord to the glory of God the Father.

IV. Faith from Love (1 Peter 1:8–9)

Approved faith cannot exist if it has not arisen from love. Faith manifests itself because “God’s love has been poured into our hearts” by the Holy Spirit in the new birth (Rom. 5:5). We would not believe if the Spirit had not brought us to love. Thus we see in these verses that love, faith, joy, and hope all flow together in singularly pure affection for the one who is altogether lovely, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A. “Though you have not seen him, you love him.”

Although believers have not seen Jesus Christ, they have been brought to love Him by the Spirit’s work of showing us Christ through the Word. We are led by the truths of Scripture, which are energized into our minds, souls, and hearts by the Holy Spirit, to love the Savior who is set forth there. We see His excellence, His perfect obedience to the Father, and His condescension to sinners, and the hate for God that formerly dominated the soul is pushed aside and replaced by love. This love is the fountain from which faith flows (cf. Gal. 5:6) so that we want only Christ and His righteousness, for we know that it alone can bring us to God (Phil. 3:7–9).

B. “Rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.”

The sight of the beauty and graciousness of Christ, and the anticipation of the reality of presence with Him at His coming again, can hardly do anything else than inspire joy. The ineffable reality of the divine goodness expressed in saving us far exceeds any ability we might have to express it. Having rescued us from eternal woe, He gives instead eternal joy. Having received

in our stead eternal wrath, He has also merited in our stead eternal life. When one contemplates what is at stake in God's grace in giving Christ to save us, we soon run out of adequate expression in human language. Salvation presently possessed is awaiting the believer in its fullness. As William Cowper wrote, "When this poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave, then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy power to save."



Sylvia's Comments: We were not alive when Jesus lived on the earth, yet we actually love Him. This is the Holy Spirit's work in transforming our minds, hearts, and spirits. He made us live with eyes wide open, ears unclogged, and a defogged mind. We live by faith: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). This is God's grace-gift that we could not understand before receiving it, and of which the unbelieving world is clueless.

We are 100 percent invested in Jesus Christ. We know without a doubt that we cannot and will not be separated from Him. Because of this, we have immeasurable joy that the world cannot see or understand. Sometimes we even wonder at the peace, courage, and internal joy we have when external things say we should be terrified, cowardly, and sad.

Peter says this is our reality. We are getting what we signed up for—the eternal salvation God foreordained before creation. As we depend more on Christ, our faith becomes unshakable, we gain an unworldly joy, and we confidently take hold of our salvation.

V. The Prophecied Coming of Christ (1 Peter 1:10–12)

This coming of Christ is not something that has just recently been introduced into the world. Rather, it was prepared for, and many of the elements of His incarnation and salvific work were introduced in the centuries past by the prophets



Sylvia's Comments: Prophets were God's mouthpieces, speaking truth to generations about God's set plan, His active work in the world, the coming of the Messiah, and the judgment at the end of time. "The Spirit of Christ" revealed much to them, but not all things. They knew that grace in the form of the Messiah was coming, and because this was the most important event in the world, they spent countless hours trying to pinpoint the time when the grace of God would be revealed in a Savior who would deliver His people from sin's bondage and eternal death.

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- A. "Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you" (v. 10).
1. The operation of God for dealing with sin did not arrive unannounced or without a predicted framework by which its features could be tested (John 5:46–47). The prophets gave special attention by the Spirit of God to this very thing. The prophetic word had been pointing toward this since Genesis 3:15.
 2. Notice that the entire scheme of the gospel is described as "grace." The prophets prophesied of grace coming to the people. It was experienced as grace by old covenant believers (Ps. 32:1–2;

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Ps. 111:4–9) and prophesied as grace, a salvation fully accomplished by the life and death of a substitute (Isa. 53:4–6).

- B. Its prophetic content consists of two things: sufferings and glory.

The resistance to Christ, in addition to the hardness of heart, self-righteousness, and spiritual pride, came from failure to embrace the prophetic word that glory could not come without the preparative of suffering—“the glories that would follow.”

1. “The sufferings of Christ” were seen in the entire sacrificial system and were scattered throughout the Psalms that were sung in worship and recited in their homes (e.g., Ps. 22). All the prophets had this mysterious element of the suffering of the Rescuer, the one in whom the oppressed could take refuge. Not only must He suffer before the peculiar glories of redemption follow, but individuals must look on His suffering and individually, one by one, mourn over their sins that pierced Him (Zechariah 12:10–14).
2. “The glories that would follow.” These are the subsequent glories (Ps. 110:1–3; Ps. 2:1–9). The humiliation of Christ necessarily preceded His glories. As He came to represent the people the Father had given Him, He first had to complete the requirements of the law both in personal obedience for righteousness and in death for forgiveness. Having accomplished that, the glories connected with such absolute obedience were His and were to be given to His people. This mighty, suffering one would be

given authority and the righteous means to assign some to everlasting life and some to everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2).

C. The prophets were assigned to a particular work.

To what work were the prophets assigned? The revelation of such a salvation, born in grace and consummated in a unique person, naturally raised their inquisitive natures; so they searched: “What person or time?” But the knowledge could come only by revelation. Their words established an outline of His person and work. They also generated an anticipation.

1. They were perplexed as to what kind of person this could be. For example, Daniel saw one “like a son of man” to whom the Ancient of Days gave “dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him” (Daniel 7:13–14). This kingdom is everlasting. What sort of a Son of Man could this be? Isaiah in chapter 61 has the revelation of an anointed one who will heal the brokenhearted, comfort those who mourn (Isa. 61:1–2), and “will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations” (Isa. 61:11). What person could be so qualified? When we look at Matthew 11:4, Luke 4:17–21, Luke 7:22, and John 5:46, we learn who this is.
2. They were perplexed as to what time this person would be. Isaiah 11 gives a tantalizingly attractive picture of messianic accomplishments and has the refrain “in that day” (Isa. 11:10–11; also 12:1). What day is this? When will such a transformation of this

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wicked, evil, disobedient, rebellious, malicious, murderous, vengeful world take place? Who is sufficient for these things? “God is my salvation. . . . Great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel” (Isa. 12:2, 6).

D. The knowledge of the fulfillment of these things, just like their prediction, was committed to revelation.

Like the prophets, the apostles were vehicles of the Holy Spirit’s predictions.

1. The Holy Spirit’s prediction of the work of the redeemer (Luke 10:17–24; 2 Peter 1:20–21) would come to pass and would be explained by apostles. Many eyes have desired to see what came to pass in that generation.
2. God revealed to the prophets that the disclosure of more details was reserved for later. As the life of Jesus unfolded and the disciples observed Him, they, along with Peter, drew the conclusion that He was the Christ (Matt. 16:16–17; John 1:41, 45, 49; 2:11; 4:29, 42; 6:68–69), a truth revealed to Peter by the Father. However, the reality of His sufferings must still be absorbed by them and then must come to light by a revealed understanding.

E. The recipients were blessed.

1. Messiah announced, proclaimed, and preached to you (1 Peter 1:12). Peter emphasized the magnitude of the blessing of having all these things proclaimed as a completed transaction. The very things for which others searched and that perplexed the disciples for

some time as the messianic work gradually unfolded before them are now announced (see 1 John 1:1–4).

2. “Those who preached the good news to you” have unveiled the concrete fulfillment of those mysterious truths and undecipherable combinations of attributes and actions that so perplexed the prophets. Paul marveled at this same fact in Romans 16:25–26. Preaching the full manifestation of “the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages” brought to his lips the doxology: “To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen” (Rom. 16:27).
3. “By the Holy Spirit sent from heaven.” The revelatory work of the Spirit continued even as the apostles preached and as they wrote to the churches what they preached (John 15:26–27).
4. Angels also announced the coming of certain stages of the mission of the Son of God (Luke 1:35; Acts 1:10–11), but the announcement of the gospel was reserved for men, for redeemed sinners. The confession of 1 Timothy 3:16 places these two realities next to each other: “seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations.” Elect angels looked upon the travail and final vindication of the Son of God with amazement and wonder; fallen sinners redeemed by these events proclaim Him among the nations.



Sylvia's Comments: In God's mercy, He showed them that this was “not yet.” They were speaking God's words that would be fulfilled centuries later. The gospel of Christ was preached for thousands of years to innumerable people, and

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some believed. God preserved a remnant of believers. When Christ came to earth, He preached the truth. Following the resurrection, Peter, Paul, John, Luke, Matthew, Mark, and others preached the same gospel, and many believed.

The world has never been without the hope of the gospel. Even as God sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden, He told them of the coming Savior who would undo what they had done. Even angels are in wonder to this day at all God has planned and is executing.
