

The Benefits of Salvation Series

Born for Glory: Kept by the Power of God

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Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, wrote from personal knowledge and experience under the superintending influence of the Holy Spirit as he addressed the diaspora, scattered strangers going through a time of suffering and persecution. He gives us hope because of his story.

The son of Jonas, Simon lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum with his brother Andrew. Simon, whose name means “listening,” becomes the Man of Rock, someone with a strong, firm character, a stone chosen by the Builder. Simon Peter was a fisherman by trade and a married man (Matthew 4:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 9:5). Jesus drew him and Andrew his brother by invitation, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)

Spokesman of the Apostles, Peter asked questions, asked for meanings of difficult sayings, inquired about rewards for following the Master, and walked on water! He is the first person to confess Jesus as Son of the Living God. He witnessed the transfiguration. He saw Jesus raise Jairus’ daughter to life.

Peter also struggled with restraint. (Matthew 16; Matthew 17:4, 5; Matthew 19:27; Matthew 26:33, 34) Learning to listen to Jesus did not come without rebuttal and boasting in assertions of his own will in proud array. The sharpest rebukes given by Christ seem to be directed at Peter, and Peter suffers the agony of denying his Lord. (Luke 22) The descent to blasphemy began with self-seeking (Matthew 19:27) and self-confidence (Matthew 26) to an inability to “watch” with Jesus and pray not to be led into temptation in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:40, 41) to a rash action (John 18:10, 11) to following afar off (Matthew 26:58) to standing with evil companions (John 18:18) to blasphemy (Mark 14:70, 71).

Nevertheless, this very human man with contradictions and inconsistencies finds himself restored as Jesus in John 21 comes to him in love. No longer does Peter respond to Jesus with great swelling words and exaggerations of truth. Jesus promotes Peter from the “Follow Me...” to “Feed My sheep.” Yet in the struggle between human loyalty and self-interest, the radical change does not mature until Pentecost.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Peter changes from coward to courageous, ignorant to enlightened, inquisitive to submissive, from boasting of self to boasting of Christ, and from timid and afraid to fearless and bold. He raises the dead. He has visions of the move of God in regard to the Gentiles. He demonstrates humility in the opposition of Paul (Acts 15, Galatians 2). This tenderhearted and affectionate man no longer presumes, but discovers as he has lived it the preserving power of God’s love in salvation. With the authority of an apostle, he writes his letter. Jesus had prayed for him,

and now, when he has turned back, he comes to strengthen the brethren. Borne along by the Holy Spirit, he speaks to us today a message of hope, grace, and glory.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” praises God with a name never revealed in the OT, namely “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Yet the phrase reminds us of many such praises to God in the OT, e.g. Genesis 14:20; 24:27; Ruth 4:14; 1 Samuel 25:32; 1 Kings 1:48; Psalm 28:6; 31:21; 41:13. The Living God has blessed us with the benefits of salvation; therefore, bless the Lord. Psalm 103: 1-5...

¹Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! ²Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: ³Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, ⁴Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, ⁵Who satisfies your mouth with good things, (Psalm 103: 1-5 NKJV)

“The term ‘Father’, as applied to the first person of the Trinity, signifies not that the Father in any way created the Son or caused him to exist (for the Son has always existed and was never created, Jn. 1:1-3; 8:58; 17:5, 24; Rev. 22:13), but that He relates to the Son as a father relates to a son normally: the Father plans and directs, the Son responds and obeys; the Father ‘sends’, the Son comes from the Father (Gal. 4:4; Jn. 3:16, 18; 5:19, 22, 26-27, 30). The Father creates ‘through’ the Son; all things come ‘from’ the Father ‘through’ the Son (Jn. 1:3; 2 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).” (Grudem, pages 54, 55)

What might we do when we are weighed down with discouragement because of suffering? Bless, thank, and praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for His great mercy. According to His foreknowledge (v. 2), according to His great mercy, we have been born again. This is not God knowing that we would believe or seeing ahead of time something desirable or meritorious in us, but simply according to His great mercy. He gave us new life.

In considering the work of the Godhead in salvation, we might look at it like this. The Father chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died for me on the cross and rose from the dead, I was saved. But the Holy Spirit moved into my life to save me in September, 1972, applying the work of Christ and the plan of the Father to me in time and space. God ordains the means as well as the ends.

Being ‘born anew’ (*anagennao*) with the root word *gennao*, refers to a father’s role in birthing a child, whether literally (Matthew 1:2-20) or figuratively (1 Corinthians 4:15). We have been born again into the sphere or realm of (*eis*) a living hope, i.e., the eager, confident expectation of life. This hope grows and increases in strength year after year. The resurrection of Christ out from among the dead secures for God’s people new resurrection bodies and new spiritual life. We have renewed spirits and spiritually, we have been ‘raised with Christ’ (Colossians 3:1; Ephesians 2:6; Romans 6:4, 11). 1

Peter 1:23 tells us that this living hope is grounded on the living Word of God as well. Remember, we are not as those who have no hope, and ours is a lively, living hope!

We've been born again into this living hope and also into an inheritance. We share in Christ's glory (Romans 8:17, 18; Ephesians 1:9-12) and are included in His last will and testament (John 17:22-24). Nothing can ruin it. It's incorruptible. Nothing can stain or cheapen it. It remains undefiled. It doesn't grow old and won't wear out. It is part of what we are saved to. 1 Peter 1:7 will call this hope "the appearing of Jesus Christ." Paul calls this "the blessed hope" (Titus 2:13).

We are born for glory and have some partial present enjoyment of our heavenly inheritance into which, in the spiritual realm, we have been born. "Imperishable" is a word used in the NT only of eternal heavenly realities, such as God Himself (Romans 1:23; 1 Timothy 1:17), God's word (1 Peter 1:23), and our resurrection bodies (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Corinthians 9:25; 1 Peter 3:4). "Undefiled" means "unstained by sin," as in Hebrews 7:26; 13:4; James 1:27. In the OT being defiled made a person or thing unfit to come before God in worship (Exodus 20:25; Leviticus 11:24, 43, 44; 13:3, 8, 11; Numbers 19:13, 20). Defilement not only spoke of ceremonial defilement but also moral defilement of the land by sin (Numbers 35:34; Deuteronomy 24:4; Jeremiah 2:7; 3:2). This inheritance contains nothing unworthy of God's full approval.

It is unfading. It never withers, grows dim, or loses its beauty or glory. (1 Peter 5:4) It is kept in heaven for us. The verb form for the word 'kept' here indicates a completed past activity with results that are still continuing in the present. God has stored up and reserved this inheritance in heaven for believers and keeps it there. (See 2 Peter 2:17 and Jude 13 for word use of "kept.")

In the OT Israel had their earthly inheritance taken from them in the exile and later in the Roman occupation. Even while possessing the land, the rewards decayed and the glory faded away. Defilement marred the beauty of the land's holiness before God because of repeated sin (Numbers 35:34; Jeremiah 2:7; 3:2).

This tells us that in the New Covenant, God's rewards are less material, physical, and earthly. The emphasis switches from earthly wealth (James 2:5), enjoyment of enduring physical health (2 Corinthians 4:16), freedom from persecution (1 Peter 4:14), and having many children (1 Corinthians 7:7) as indicating the favor of God to spiritual realities and rewards. Faith recognizes New Covenant rewards as better: present sufficiency for material needs (Philippians 4:19), present spiritual fellowship with Christ (1 Peter 1:8), and a future inheritance both material and eternal that is glorious (1 Peter 1:4).

Paul would concur. "So we do not lose heart...For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)

How do believers stay faithful to Christ when persecution and suffering intensify?
Peter assures his readers that they, by God's power (*dunamei Theou*), are being guarded (kept) through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

This word (*phroureo*) here means 'kept safe, carefully watched', and carries with it a military context. Philo (*Moses* 1.235) and the apocryphal books like Judith 3.6; 1

Esdras 4:56; Wisdom 17:16 talk about the people who agreed with the ten unfaithful spies as deciding that the treasures of Canaan were 'so strongly guarded' that they could not be taken away. At Damascus, the governor 'guarded' the city in order to seize Paul (2 Corinthians 11:32). The word can mean both "kept from escaping" and "protected from attack." "God is preserving believers from escaping out of His kingdom, and He is protecting them from external attacks." (Grudem, page 58)

This guarding is continually happening by God's power which is working through the believer's faith, a personal activity of individual believers. This suggests that the believer's personal faith or trust in God is the means such that God's power energizes and continually sustains individual, personal faith. Believe what Jesus believes. God's power sustains our faith. Faith is a gift. When our faith runs out the bottom of our feet, we can and must move to the faith of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. And when we realize our faith is not sufficient, but Jesus' faith is, stay there. Bless the Lord that those in Christ are kept by the power of God.

There's a goal...salvation. Here it is the future full possession of the blessings of our redemption, salvation final and complete. It's ready and prepared, but in the last time God will reveal it.

This should fill us with hope and confidence as God's guarding preserves believers until they receive their full, heavenly salvation. God will accomplish it. Attaining full and final salvation depends on God's power which is continually working through the believer's faith. Christ's faith and faithfulness unite to us so completely that living as one in Him, His power energizes and sustains our faith.

We are, as it were, guarded for glory. Romans 8:30 speaks of already being glorified. What awaits is the public revelation of this glory (Romans 8:18-23). God gives us His glory as assurance (John 17:24; Ephesians 1:13, 14). This gives reason to rejoice!

JOHN 17:24 - "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world..."

Having the privilege of being adopted and holding the status of sonship legally bestowed by grace, true believers can rejoice in salvation by considering their constituted status as children of God.

1. They have placed upon them the Father's Name (Ephesians 2:19; 3:14, 15).
2. They have the Father's protection and provision.
3. They have the seal of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13).
4. They become Christ's brothers or sisters (Romans 8:29), heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).
5. They have an inheritance waiting in heaven "imperishable, and undefiled, which will not fade away" (1 Peter 1:4).
6. They have assurance of coming into this inheritance because of being guarded and protected by the power of God through faith. (1 Peter 1:5)
7. They are born-out-of-God ones, born for glory, with a living hope reserved in heaven and ready to be revealed. (1 Peter 1:3-5)

"Adoption is the highest privilege available to fallen children of Adam, with all its privileges accruing to the one who enjoys the status of being an heir of all the promises

of God and of everlasting salvation—access to the Father’s throne of grace, his pity, protection, provision, and chastening, and the seal of his Spirit unto the day of redemption.” (Reymond, page 762)

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