

V. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“A Doxology of Salvation”
I Peter 1:3–12
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This is our fifth study in I Peter. This is God’s Word, the truth. I Peter 1:3–12 says [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. [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.*

[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.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever, by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

What is my dilemma? I have a passage of Scripture in front of me that from structure begs to be preached as one sermon. What am I talking about? In the Greek, I Peter 1:3–12 is 177 words and it is one sentence in the original. For it to be translated in English and for us to understand it was broken down into sentences. If Peter puts that together as one sentence that kind of begs for this to be handled as one singular thought in some sense or fashion. If you, like me, when you read it, notice this passage as a treasure trove – inheritance, salvation, kept for you, guarded for you, imperishable, undefiled, ready to be revealed – then it just begs to dig deeper into this treasure trove and not to walk by it.

Here’s my solution. In this study I am going to do an overview of this passage and then give you three takeaways and therefore I am handling the one sentence. Then I will come back to this passage because this one sentence clearly breaks into three different stanzas/verses, all around praise to God for the salvation we have inherited in Jesus Christ. I can give you an illustration of this by using that great hymn ‘All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.’ This hymn very clearly has a central message to it that just overwhelms the singer in its singular message of all bowing and giving glory to Jesus Christ as we bring forth the royal diadem as we crown Him. Taking a closer look at each stanza/verse in the hymn gradually builds on its singular message.

*1. All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
bring forth the royal diadem,*

and crown him Lord of all.

In the first stanza the angels in heaven are giving praise to Jesus.

*2. Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
ye ransomed from the fall,
hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.*

In the next stanza the elect of Israel (Old Testament) are hailing Jesus' Name.

*3. Let every kindred, every tribe
on this terrestrial ball,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.*

Now we're looking at all the Gentiles, who are supposed to fall before Him.

*4. O that with yonder sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
and crown him Lord of all.*

Now all the saved of the ethnicities are gathered up in the new heavens and the new earth and we're giving praise to God forever, for all eternity.

That is kind of like this doxology here in I Peter 1:3–12. It is glorious as a central theme but as you dig deeper into it you are digging out these treasures within it. So in this study we'll do an overview and then for the next three studies we will take each stanza one by one to understand this great doxology of praise to God for our great blessings that we have in our salvation inheritance.

Think of this way. Here is this Trinitarian doxology with 177 words and one sentence and what makes it even more significant is who wrote it. Peter is the author who is that brash, tempestuous Simon called to be a Disciple where we saw that Jesus broke him 18 times to save him, make him and use him for His glory and Peter's joy. The result is that Simon the Disciple becomes Peter the Apostle now bold and humble and what is the last thing Jesus commands Peter personally to do? He tells him by the Sea of Galilee to 'feed My sheep' and not three decades you get Peter feeding the sheep. This I Peter letter are the first words out of his mouth.

He has done the conventional thing of identifying himself. He has identified his audience as the elect exiles where believers are resident aliens in this world with our citizenship in heaven as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. He identified the strong desire of his letter which was that grace and peace be multiplied to you. Grace is because we are dead sinners in need of a Savior and need exponential grace multiplied and the result of grace is peace from God, peace with God and the peace of God. So out of convention in beginning a letter Peter's first words out of his heart for the elect exiles is a doxology.

This past Friday when I watched the Briarwood High School football team come out of the locker room I remembered those times when I played ball and there was a big game about to be played. Right before you went out the players are just on edge as they are anticipating what the coach is going to say to them before they head out to play the game. Here is the most privileged Apostle of the most privileged Twelve now what is he going to tell us before he sends us out as elect exiles for the fiery ordeal and to give an account for the hope that is within us as

we confess Jesus as Lord? This is Rome where Peter is writing this. Here you can confess Jesus as Lord as long as you first confess Caesar as Lord and if you don't then welcome to the fiery ordeal.

The first thing he says is '*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*' So the very first words he gives to us to send us out, his locker room talk to us so to speak, is the doxology. This doxology is not only in one sentence but it is in a Trinitarian framework and given in three stanzas. Here are the three stanzas.

The first stanza is found in I Peter 1:3–5 and it is praising God for the blessing of our salvation inheritance from Christ. I Peter 1:3–5 says [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.*

Then he goes to the second stanza which is in I Peter 1:6–9 and it says [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.* So this stanza is praising God for the blessing of our salvation trials and why do they come? He tells us in this stanza.

The third stanza is praising God for the blessing of our salvation truth which is found in I Peter 1:10–12 and says [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.*

The very people that gave the ground work message from the Old Testament were trying to understand it and couldn't understand what you see plainly. The angels in heaven long to understand. When we sing 'Amazing Grace' and angel can't sing it. They have no idea experientially what you and I can sing. They haven't received grace. They know the facts and wisdom of it. They rejoice and give God praise for it but they have not drank of it as you and I have – the wonderful grace of Jesus, deep, wide, high and long.

This doxology all begins with '*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!*' So let's dig a little deeper on this one. How does God the Father be God of Jesus? It is because Jesus is God. So how can God be God for God? In the Trinity we have God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit so when Jesus was claiming here on earth to be the Son of God He wasn't claiming subordination but they knew He was claiming to be God. The people asked Him 'By what authority do You clean out this Temple?' He says 'It's My Father's House, I own it.' He claimed to be God. So as soon as Jesus said He was the Son of God they took up stones to stone Him for blasphemy of claiming to be God.

So in this opening doxology we are praising God the Father who is the Father God of the Son of God in equality with God but is the God of Jesus not as Son of God but as Son of Man. He is God of Jesus as the Son of Man while He is Father God of the Jesus as the Son of God. As Son of God He is equal to the Father but as Son of Man He has come to do the will of the One

who sent Him. Psalm 40:8a says [8a] *I delight to do your will, O my God.* That's why He says in John 20:17b, [17b] *'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'* So His eternal relationship is one of equality as the Son of God but His Incarnational relationship is where He is carrying out the direction of the Father as His God to accomplish it and setting before us who belong to Him how we are to live as the Son of Man has redeemed us from our sins.

Here is the key phrase in the opening, *'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!'* He is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Even with the inadequacies of this preacher what I'm about to walk through will excite the life of believers but only believers. If He is not your Lord and Savior this is just time filler. If He is your Lord and Savior there is no greater joy than the expulsive and effusive praise of God. What I want more than anything is for you to know Jesus because without Him there is nothing but death. In Him there is a salvation inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, undiminished, reserved for you and you He is reserving for that inheritance.

I'd like to give you three takeaways from this overview of I Peter 1:3–12 as Peter is speaking to the elect exiles. The first takeaway is there is an undeniable pattern in the Word of God that is being revealed here. The undeniable pattern is this; effective witnesses for the Triune God of glory are effusive worshippers of the Triune God of grace and glory. If you want to be a witness for Jesus Christ you must first be a worshipper of Christ. Peter is about to send us out. He is speaking to wives who have tyrannical husbands, husbands who have recalcitrant wives and parents who are raising children. When you own Christ as Lord you need to be ready to give an account of the hope that is in you declaring Jesus with gentleness and with gentle heart for there will be those who come against you and want you to say 'Caesar is lord.' Don't be surprised at the fiery ordeal. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Before Peter gives all these directives he starts off with doxology by telling us that effective witnesses are effusive worshippers of the true and living God.

Praise and worship to the living God is the undeniable pattern throughout the Word of God. When Moses brought the people out of exodus and delivered them he took them to the mountain of God to worship. Then when they headed toward the Promised Land on the journey through the wilderness they put the tabernacle in the middle so they would worship in the journey. When Moses writes the Pentateuch the vast majority of it is regulation and direction as to how to worship. Worship is not an add-on and I know we treat it that way. We tend to wonder if Sunday worship will fit into our schedule this week but for the believer who wants to be an effective witness the expulsive effusion of worship is foundational first and foremost. That's what makes us effective witnesses for Christ. Effective witnessing for Christ is built upon worship and it's not just when you look back in the Old Testament either.

Peter writes this letter of I Peter in about 62 AD and two years later he will die for Jesus right there in Rome where he writes this letter. Two years previous to this from 59 to 61 AD Paul was in Rome in prison and while Paul was there he wrote four epistles – Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and the last one he wrote was Ephesians. By the way, the book of Ephesians wasn't really written to Ephesians for it was written generally to the church in Turkey starting with the mother church in Turkey which was Ephesus, thus it's called Ephesians. So Peter two years later is also writing an epistle to the churches in Turkey but Paul has already written one.

When you look at what Paul wrote in the opening book of Ephesians he does what Peter has done where he identifies himself, his audience and his strongest desire. After Paul's two

opening verses Ephesians 1:3–14 is one sentence but it's not 177 words like Peter's, it's 228 words and it's Trinitarian like Peter's. So the following in the original was written as one sentence but through the English translation has been broken up into verses and sentences.

Ephesians 1:3–14 says [3] **Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in Christ with every spiritual **blessing** in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. [7] In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight [9] making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

[11] In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, [12] so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. [13] In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Notice how it gives praise to the Father who authored our salvation, praise to the Son who accomplished our salvation and praise to the Spirit who is the guarantee as He applies our salvation. Paul's passage here is also three stanzas like Peter's and as Paul starts his off it is also a doxology using 'doxa' three times in the opening statement where Peter only used it once. Paul is trying to tell us something by using this word three times for the Christian life is doxological to the praise of God. I Corinthians 10:31 says [31] *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* That is why gathered worship is crucial to life worship which is bearing witness to Jesus Christ.

Look at when Jesus does His ministry. When Jesus does a miracle they hide their face and worship. Jesus says twice to the woman at the well 'The Father seeks true worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and truth' and it's the only time in the Bible that it says God seeks something. Wherever the Bible peels back the shrouds of heaven like in Isaiah and Revelation and lets us see what is being done in heaven, they are all worshipping. Doxological praise is not simply something to squeeze into life. It is absolutely foundational in the Christian life.

Two of my favorite moments in gathered worship are one when the choir finishes ministering in music and then the congregation stands to sing the doxology – 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow' – and we bring before Him to lay at His feet just a portion (offering) that everything we have is from Him, undeserved but glorious. If you know you have inherited salvation from the Father, through the Son and by the Spirit you will worship. If you think you added something to your salvation worship won't mean that much to you but if you know you have salvation praise God from whom all blessings flow.

The second takeaway is an unmistakable principle where embracing our salvation inheritance is foundational to engaging our salvation imperatives. I Peter 1:13 says [13] *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Starting from this verse all the way to the end of I Peter 5 will have imperative command after imperative command. If you don't want Jesus to tell you what to do then don't continue reading the following studies on

the rest of I Peter. You will notice that Peter never gives you your salvation commands without telling you your salvation blessings. The foundation is not that we are because of what we do but the foundation is we are because of what He has done and because of what we inherit from Him we can now do what we do for Him. We must understand and believe what Christ has done freely for us in order to do what Christ has commanded us to do for Him.

In Ephesians 1 through 3 Paul tell us 28 our blessings in Christ by starting off each time throughout that chapter 'In Christ...' and then he gets to Ephesians 4:1 and says [1] *I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.* In other words, now that you see how glorious this is walk in a manner worthy but not in a manner worthy to be called but worthy of your calling. In every epistle of Paul he tells you what God has done in and for you by His grace before he tells you what in the power of grace you do for Him to His glory, lest you think what you do gets your inheritance. No! Your inheritance is because of what He does and because of that this is what you can now do. You don't do anything to add to the inheritance but you do what you do because of the inheritance.

So when you know what you are in Christ, by the grace of God in Christ, now you are ready to do what you do for Christ. In Romans chapters 1 through 11 Paul tells us the glories of the Gospel and then this is how he ends it. Romans 11:33–36 says [33] *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*

[34] *“For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” [35] “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?”*

[36] *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.* Then he starts off in Romans 12:1 saying, [12] *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by (not for) the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.* Then he gives you from Romans 12 through 16 what the Christian life is and he does this in all the books he writes. He gives you the blessings of your salvation inheritance which are foundational to engaging your salvation imperatives.

There are some churches that make the mistake of preaching the salvation imperatives as if that is what secures your salvation inheritance. They also make the mistake of just telling people what they have in Christ and not what they are called to do in Christ, lest people misuse that. We can't do either one of these. We have to say here is who you are in Christ by the grace of God, now here is what you do for Christ, not for salvation but for Christ because of the grace of God. This tells us why worship is so important. Our focus in worship is that we are constantly rejoicing in the blessing we have in Christ as our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

He made me and I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I worship Him. He saved me to the praise of His glorious grace. I praise Him. He sustains with life, breath and everything that I have and He gives me breath so that I can praise His holy name. In other words, gathered worship focuses on the inheritances so that we can embrace as we scatter in the imperatives. Worship fascinates itself and focuses upon these inheritances that we have in and for Christ so we have this wonderful Lord's Day to do this.

The second thing I enjoy in our Lord's Day worship gathering is that when we have greeted and we sing that hymn of adoration to lift up praise to God with His people. That moment where I just want to say to all to give all you are in praise whether you are singing in the choir, playing an instrument or being a part of the congregation because I just want to praise God from whom all blessings flow – adoration to Him for there is no One like Him! He saved me

when He didn't need me. He wanted me and I needed Him but didn't want Him. Worship is foundational.

The third takeaway is the inheritance of God's elect is their salvation by grace secured through the work of God's love in Christ which is now finished and assured but yet to be revealed and received. Grace is God's unmerited favor of giving you His salvation through the love of Christ. I have a new heart, a new record, a new home, a new family and I'm getting a new life. I have all kinds of new stuff and it's already been secured by Jesus Christ and assured to be given to me but I'm not home yet. I don't have my new body yet or the new heavens or new earth yet and I don't have Jesus in eyesight yet. I love Him but I haven't seen Him but I will because my inheritance undefiled, incorruptible, undiminished is Jesus. He has me and I'm in Him with Him in me but I'm not there with Him yet.

When will we receive it? It is not when you die. When you die you will take another step that is called the intermediate step. You will receive the inheritance that is secured for you when that trumpet sounds and when the voice of the arch angel sounds – ten thousand years and forevermore. That is when it will be received and revealed at the last time which is the end of time and we will praise Him together forever. Until then we worship Him and until then we rejoice in our salvation inheritance while we embrace our salvation imperatives. Until then we are assured our inheritance is kept and we are assured that we the heirs are being kept for our inheritance which is Jesus Himself.

In my office I have a flag that one of our elders, Fred Taylor, gave me. The flag only has 15 stars. At the time this flag flew over Fort Mchenry there were only 15 states in the US and it was during the War of 1812. At Fort Mchenry there was a battle going on. There was a man who was an ambassador for the US who was trying to bring about an armistice or a peace with England and the battle broke out so they put him in a prison ship out in the bay of Baltimore. He was with other sailors, marines and militia who had been captured who were also in this prison ship. He describes that hold in all of its filth but he also describes the patriot spirit of all those who were in the hold of that ship.

The battle raged all night. The next day, due to his status as an official ambassador, they brought him up from the hold of the ship while the prisoners were peering through the grated floors, as he went up. The prisoners called out to him 'Mr. Key, o say can you see the flag?' He said 'I see it' and he pulled out an envelope and began to write the National Anthem of the US.

*Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave.*

When you go into a hostile world and you don't say 'Caesar is lord' this world is ready to do you away but you go worship. While moments like that in our history are interesting I know there are many nations here who have their own history but we are resident aliens here, citizens of the Kingdom of God and when the world brings its worse we cry out to each other, 'Are you still standing? Is Christ lifted up?' Through bursting bombs, fiery ordeals, being marginalized, ostracized and livelihood even if they take the body, we worship and the anger holds. The anger is Christ. He is our inheritance. He is ours because we are His and He keeps us. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we can spend together in Your Word. Father in Your kind Providence I would think there are some drawn to this and are reading this to hear that every inheritance in this world fades, diminishes and are defiled and corrupt where thieves break in and steal. Stock markets crash, cars break down and houses deteriorate but we have an inheritance reserved in heaven that is undefiled, undiminished, incorruptible and that has been secured through Jesus Christ, not by our work but His work, freely given to us as an inheritance. If you have never received that gift would you do that today? Just say ‘Jesus I’m a sinner and I put my trust in You. Make me Yours for You are my inheritance.’ If you would like to pray with someone please call us at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Father, my last request is that we as Your people will rise up and leave here. We have gathered to worship and we know scatter to worship with lives as witness that lift up praise to God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, hallelujah, what a Savior! Amen.

Power Point

AN OVERVIEW

STANZA ONE – (vv. 3–5)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Inheritance

STANZA TWO – (vv. 6–9)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Trials

STANZA THREE – (vv. 10–12)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Truth

LIFE TAKEAWAYS FOR ELECT EXILES

AN UNDENIABLE PATTERN

Effective witnesses for the Triune God of glory are effusive worshippers of the Triune God of grace and glory.

AN UNMISTAKEABLE PRINCIPLE

Embracing our salvation inheritance is foundational to engaging our salvation imperatives.

AN UNCOMPARABLE PRECEPT

The “inheritance” of God’s elect is their salvation by grace secured through the work of God’s love in Christ which is NOW finished and assured, but YET to be revealed and received.