

VII. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“Praising God for Our Salvation Trials”
I Peter 1:3–5
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This is our seventh study in I Peter. I will be focusing on the first stanza of the doxology of our salvation inheritance. This is God’s Word, and God’s Word is the truth. 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.*

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

Astoundingly, when I Peter is written probably about a couple of months before another book in the Bible was being written. Interestingly from 59 to 63 AD Paul and Peter crossed over with each other in Rome. When Paul was in Rome he was in prison and wrote four epistles. One of them was the book of Ephesians and it really wasn’t just sent to one church, Ephesus, which was the mother church, but it was sent to Ephesus to be scattered to all the churches in Turkey. Then Peter not long after that writes an epistle to be sent to the churches in Turkey and it is what we are studying – I Peter.

It is also interesting because both men take the same approach led by the Spirit of God and open their epistles with a doxology of interesting proportions. Ephesians 1:3–14 is one sentence containing 228 words where the Apostle Paul gives a glorious doxology of worship that is Trinitarian framed declaring the majesty and blessings we have in Christ to the glory of God. Peter basically does the same thing in I Peter 1:3–12 but only uses 177 in his one sentence doxology. In the Bible both are divided up into sentences in English because we need it to be to understand it but in the Greek they were both just one sentence. Peter’s doxology, you would think when it was one sentence it would be jumbled with phrases but it does have phrases yet it’s not jumbled but unbelievably rich, containing three stanzas.

There has been some discussion with Peter’s whether it should be called a eulogy or a doxology because it is good words about God. The Greek word *doxa* is the word we get doxology from and is translated blessed or praised or praised be to God. Doxa is found at the conclusion of each of the three stanzas to the praise of God the Father and His glory in I Peter 1:6, to the praise of His Son in I Peter 1:12 and to the praise of God the Spirit.

Another thing that is really interesting is that both Peter and Paul are preparing people to be faithful to Christ who are under enormous persecution in the place today we call Turkey that will go all the way to ‘fiery ordeals.’ They don’t resort to first a coach-me-up talk, they first resort to worship, a doxology. It is worship that undergirds faithfulness in the Christian life. Both these doxologies are clearly framed with the Trinity and clearly tell you who you are in Christ to get you ready for the commands from Christ. Both of them are so rich in content!

I Peter 1:3–12 is a deep dive into a treasure trove and I said that so you would dive back with me into the first stanza for this study. We are going to look at why trials are in the Christian

life and how God uses them but you can't embrace trials without understanding where your confidence is in the trial. Don't listen to anyone who tells you when you come to Jesus He takes away the trials. That's wrong! I have trials now that I would never have before I came to Jesus. Secondly, He doesn't take them away He sends them and has a purpose in them. The blessing is not to have a faith that is strong enough to miss the trials but it's to have a God-strengthened faith that takes you through the trials and your faith is actually strengthened further in the trials. How and why do we know that?

First I want to remind you that I Peter 1:3–12 are in three stanzas. Stanza one is praising God for the blessing of our salvation inheritance where is found in I Peter 1:3–5. Stanza two found in I Peter 1:6–9 which we will cover in the next study, is praising God for the blessing of our salvation trials but I will give you some understanding on how to get ready for those trials. Stanza three is found in I Peter 1:10–12 which is praising God for the blessing of our salvation truth and this has been given to us from the Old Testament in its fulfillment in the New Testament.

In this study we will focus on I Peter 1:3–5. I will answer two questions from this text. In this stanza we learn that God has a Diving inheritance that He has kept for you. Why? I Peter 1:3–4 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,*

We have a salvation inheritance because of His mercy. It was not because we wanted it or deserved it or earned it or we were looking for it. On the contrary, we don't deserve and we're not only undeserving but we're ill-deserving, but God was rich in mercy. Ephesians 2:4–5 says *[4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—* Peter basically says the same thing in I Peter 1:3.

You don't come to Jesus to get born again but you come to Jesus because you're born again. Why do you have to be born again to come to Jesus? It is because your dead but by His mercy you are born again and you come to Jesus, to that Living Hope in which you come through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's important because if we have a Divine inheritance then that means it comes to us through a will. You don't get the benefits of the will until the one who makes the will dies. So we have an inheritance because Jesus died for us on the cross and then you receive that inheritance because He lives, through the resurrection of Jesus.

According to I Peter 1:4 we have been born again through His resurrection to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for us. And it is unlike any inheritance you will ever get in this world. Every inheritance in this world will be perishable, defiled, will fade and will diminish but this is an inheritance that can't be defiled and can't perish for this inheritance has been kept for you. That's great but who is going to keep you? No wonder we're in the doxology because the same God who has secured the inheritance and kept it for you, is the same God who keeps you for it. I Peter 1:4 says it is kept in heaven for you. How is God going to keep me? I Peter 1:5 says *[5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

So, here are two questions related to stanza one. The first question is why are we kept? We are kept for this salvation inheritance because it is a living hope and it is ready to be revealed for us. Our inheritance is already ready. It is ready now. He is getting you ready but the

inheritance is ready. He will get you ready through trials yet we have a down payment of this inheritance through God's mercy when we were born again.

Salvation is deliverance from sin to God by Christ and that means God has eradicated the persuasion of sin in your life. He gave you eyes to see and ears to hear. God has delivered you from the power of sin for you have been born again and are no longer living under the dominion of sin. You still have sin living in you but you are not living in sin, in its power and dominion. God has delivered you from the penalty of sin. Romans 8:1 says *[1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* God has delivered you from the position of sin for you have been brought into the family of God. God is delivering you from the practice of sin for you are growing in the grace and knowledge of Christ but you still don't have the whole thing yet. God will deliver you from the presence of sin and give you a new body in the new heavens and new earth. That is why He says you have a salvation inheritance ready and it's there to be revealed.

Revealed means to unveil where you have that inheritance but not yet is it revealed in all of its glory before you. That will be revealed to you in the last time and that is when Jesus will come again in which we'll here the trumpet sound and the voice of the arch angel. That is when you will go to the new heavens and new earth and get the full inheritance that is now ready for you in that day. For now He is getting you ready for it by keeping you.

Second question is how are we kept? One, is that He is guarding you. I Peter 1:5 says we are being kept by God's power and guarded through faith. Guarded is a military term. Philippians 4:4–7 says *[4] Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. [5] Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; [6] do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. [7] And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* He will stand sentry over your heart in Christ Jesus and that's why we rejoice.

Guarded is a term in military life that refers or describes a garrison (a guard force, sentries) that protects a city under siege. This tells us we are under siege. You do realize that as a Christian you are under attack, right? If you're a believer you are under attack by Satan, the world and the old man inside, the flesh. So you are under attack from the enemy outside and the enemy inside. What is your hope? Your hope is that God is guarding you. Hopefully your hope is not that you can handle it but you can't handle it, only God can handle it. If someone other than God tells you they will guard you, don't listen to that. God is guarding you so be anxious for nothing because God is your Sentry through Christ Jesus. He is your front guard, back guard, side guard, your refuge, your fortress, for He is the Guard in the siege that you are under.

Do you realize that Satan is a lot smarter and stronger than you even though he has been defeated at the cross? According to I John 4:4, greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world, but greater is the one in the world than you. In other words, if it's just you going up against Satan or the demonic world or the world in its system of rebellion against God, there is no match for you lose. But I have a Divine inheritance waiting for me, so how am I going to get to it? God is keeping me by His power for He is my Guard. It is not by my power or the power of ritual or resolution but by the power of the Triune God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is utterly, completely, irrevocably and relentlessly committed to guarding all of the heirs of the inheritance. In other words, the power of God is like an arrayed army that keeps everyone in the citadel of God absolutely safe.

That is not all for there is an instrument that God is using. You are being kept by God's power guarded through faith. Notice it is not by faith for it's not your faith that will deliver you but it's God who delivers you by His power through faith. Faith is the instrument. Where did you get the faith? You got it from God. John 6:29 says [29] Jesus answered them, "***This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.***" The Jewish people had just asked Jesus 'what are the works of God?' and this is how He answered them. So if you believe your faith is not your work but your faith is the result of God's work.

Ephesians 2:8–9 says [8] *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, [9] not a result of works, so that no one may boast.* Your faith came from a sovereign God and that God is now strengthening that faith with His presence and His power as you are under assault by the world, the flesh and the devil. God is guarding you with His power through your faith and your faith is actually getting stronger because of the presence of God's power through your faith in the midst of the trials that come into your life. So because I profess Christ that means I'll be under attack but I cannot handle the attack. I am incompetent, too weak and unable but I have a Savior who keeps me, upholds me and will guard me with His power through the faith that He gave me, therefore I am kept for the inheritance that He has kept.

So we know that Peter wrote I Peter. Who empowered him to write it? The Holy Spirit did. Do you think everything Peter is saying is the truth because the Holy Spirit is revealing it to you through him? Yes. So do you also think that Peter is telling you what he has already known as well? Has Peter been under attack? Did Peter falter? Did Peter fail? Did Peter repent? Did Peter get stronger? Did his faith get stronger? God already told him that he was going to do it. In Luke 22 the Lord has informed His disciples that they all are going to fall away, be fearful and desert Him but Peter basically says 'Not me Lord – thick and thin, to the end, I'm your friend, you can count on me. These other guys may run but not me.'

Luke 22:31–32 says [31] "*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*" The 'you' in verse 31 is plural, not singular. Peter is going to deny Jesus three times but He is going to pray for him and His presence, power and strength is going to his faith. Christ has interceded for you. The difference between Judas Iscariot and Peter was the intercession of Jesus for Peter wasn't just a pretty good guy that came to his senses. Peter was kept by the power of God through the instrumentality of his faith as He strengthened his faith.

Resident aliens for Christ are God-preserved heirs of Christ for a God-secured inheritance in Christ. This is a truth from the truth. Resident aliens are ones who have been saved by Christ and have a supreme citizenship in the Kingdom of God. We become ambassadors of Christ and resident aliens where we currently live. He does all this by His power and His presence through faith. So what does that mean for us today?

Here is your takeaway. The security of the heirs of God's salvation does not depend upon the strength and power of our faith but upon the strength and power of God revealed through our faith. It is God who keeps His people through faith by His power. That means the smallest or weakest Christian is as secure in the citadel of God guarded by the power and presence of God as the most esteemed or strongest Christian in the Kingdom of God. It does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs but upon God who as mercy. The text isn't telling you not to will and run but it says it doesn't depend on the will and running of His people. It depends on the grace, mercy and power of God. Not by my might, or power, or strength but

by My Spirit says the Lord (Zechariah 4:6) and there the God-preserved inheritance is for God's preserved heirs. God's heirs are preserved by His power through faith and that will stand.

I was watching a television program a while back on arm wrestling. The one man came out and he was ripped. Muscles everywhere and I don't know how his shirt even fit him. When he took off that shirt his arms were unbelievable. He came out bragging on himself and then out came this country boy wearing covered overalls. He had a red bandana sticking out of one of his pockets with a little beard. I thought 'this arm wrestling match will be short.' I was right in that it didn't take long but in about three seconds the country man had won the match. Everybody was astounded as I was at who won. They went to interview another muscle man who was a veteran at arm wrestling and he said 'how did that happen?' and the interviewer said 'Son, have you never heard of 'country strong'?' Country strong is strong and it may not look like much but it splits rails and plows fields even when the horse can't make it.

That's what we have. We have God-strong! It is God's strength and power that is at work in the lives of His people. Romans 8:31–39 says [31] *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? [32] He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? [33] Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. [34] Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, **who indeed is interceding for us.** [35] *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?**

[36] *As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."* [37] *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*³⁸ *For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,*³⁹ *nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

This isn't saying there won't be those against us. It is just saying that in comparison to the One who is for you there is no comparison. God is for you and it is His power that upholds you. He is not going to remove the trials and please don't listen to anyone who tells you that He will. The trials are not there because you didn't have enough faith. Actually the trials are there to give you more faith. He doesn't take you out of them but through them and above them.

This is a true story. A mother shared with me that there was a time that almost every morning her boy got sick and couldn't go to school in which she began to wonder what was wrong with her little boy. A holiday came and his big brother who was a left tackle, 6 feet tall and 280 pounds, came home from college. He asked his brother while he was there 'Can I walk you to school today?' His little brother was then ready to go to school that day. They found out that he wasn't really sick but wasn't going to school because there was this oversized bully that was taking his lunch money every day while he was on his way to school, as this bully pushed him around and would beat him up. That day he didn't mind going to school as he introduced his brother to this bully. Who is the bully now?

So Satan can rage. I want you to meet my Savior. One little breath is all it takes. We are upheld by the power of God. God is for those who are preserved, imperfectly but intentionally persevere in the faith. Perseverance is the evidence of preserving power of God. Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of Christ for in Him we are more than conquerors. It is His power through your faith. He gave the faith by His power. He empowers your faith in the midst of everything that would come against you.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention this. There is another inheritance besides the one we are being kept for. Romans 2:1–5 says [1] *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. [2] We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. [3] Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? [4] Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? [5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

For those who reject the patience and kindness of God, they are storing up for themselves the wrath of God on the last day. There is a last day. There is a last time. There will be a trumpet. There will be a voice. We will all go to the judgment seat and there will be one of two inheritances. One is the eternal wrath of God in a place called hell or the undefiled, imperishable, undiminished salvation of the Lord in a new heavens and a new earth. Which inheritance is yours today? If it is Christ, He'll keep you and you keep glorifying Him. If it is not Christ, come to Him today. He will save you. If you would like to pray with someone about your commitment to Christ or about your walk with Christ please contact us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200 for we'd love to talk and pray with you. Let's pray.

Prayer:

God, do Your work in our lives. Do Your work in each and every life reading this today. God, I plead with you that none would leave this with a title right to the judgment of God but that they would leave with Your mercy, the heirs of God of eternal life in Christ in a new heavens and a new earth. God, bring them to Yourself. For those who know You, we're listening for the trumpet and we follow but not with fear for our God will keep us. Our God who secured our inheritance that is ready, is our God who is securing us for the inheritance. We long to hear the trumpet and the voice of the arch angel but until that day we praise Your Name, for Christ's sake, 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

A TRUTH FROM THE TRUTH

Resident Aliens for Christ are God preserved heirs of Christ for a God secured inheritance in Christ.

TWO QUESTIONS FOR STANZA ONE – (v.5)

1. Why are we kept?
2. How are we kept?
 - We are guarded
 - ...by the power of God
 - ...through faith

LIFE TAKEAWAY

The security of the Heirs of God's salvation does not depend upon the strength and power of our faith but upon the strength and power of God revealed through our faith.