

1 Peter

I. The Nature of Our Salvation 1 Peter 1: 1-12

–The plan of our salvation is according to the foreknowledge of God and accomplished through the sanctifying work (*the setting apart*) of *God the Holy Spirit* and the sprinkled blood of Jesus Christ (this is a metaphor for the death of Christ as the substitutionary death in your place for your sins, all of them, from birth to death). (v 1-2)

–You Have a New Birth (v 3)

–An Eternal and Incorruptible Inheritance (v 4)

–Divine Protection through the Mechanism of Faith – when you believed (exercised faith) on Christ you entered a state under which God shields your salvation but as well, gives you opportunity to apply God's Word by faith and further shield your daily life with Divine power (v 5)

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–The Opportunity for Suffering for Divine Blessing (v 6-7)

–Fellowship with Christ through the Mechanism of Faith - “though you have not seen him, you love him”. (v 8-9)

–The OT Prophets sought to understand when and how this would occur (v 10-12)

–Angels sought to understand (v 12)

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II. Holy Living in Association with our Salvation 1 Peter 1:13-25 – 1 Peter 2: 1-3

–The proper mentality for the believer - *gird* or prepare your minds, *be sober*, have your *hope in Christ* (v 13)

–The proper lifestyle of the believer - as one who is *eager to obey*, do *not conform to evil desires*, *be holy* because God is Holy (v 14-16)

–The proper perspective of the believer - *God is judge*, *He purchased you at great expense*, *you have capacity to love one another* and this is your calling, you are *born of imperishable seed* (v 17-25)

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–The ABC's to spiritual growth 1 Peter 2:1-3

Stop yielding to malice (vicious disposition), all deceit (an exploiter), hypocrisy, envy and evil speaking of every kind

Start craving spiritual milk (God's Word) that you may grow into maturity

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III. Our Spiritual Identity 1 Peter 2:4-10

–Our identify is centered around Christ (v 4, 6-8)

–We are “living stones” building built into a *spiritual house* (v 5)

–We are members of a Holy Priesthood - here the reference to the Holy Priesthood of which all believers are a Holy Priest themselves, has in view our interaction with and worship of God (v 5)

–Chosen people–God choice that Christ would be the means of our salvation, hence the plan of our salvation and the moment you born again you are of the tribe of Christ, chosen by God (v 9)

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–Royal Priesthood –here this aspect of our Priesthood, called the Royal Priesthood, is horizontal in reference or with respect to our interaction with humans (v 9)

–You are a citizen of a Holy Nation (v 9)

–Enlightened – out of the darkness and into the light (v 10)

–One who has received mercy – the world waits for mercy; you have received it, now go and tell the world what God has done (v 10)

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IV. The Good Life 1 Peter 2:11-3:1-7

- Your identity on earth (know who you are) - *strangers* (temporary dweller) *aliens* (one who is passing through) (v 11)
- Abstain from the lusts of the flesh (v 11)
- Live good lives - (*kalēn*) sometimes translated “ideal” or “excellent”. We do not seek the lowest common denominator, rather the highest (v 12)
- Good lives are used to by God to impact others as they receive the Gospel (the day he visits us) (v12)
- Submission to governmental authority – (v 13-17)
- Vocational submission to authority– (v 18-25)

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Domestic submission to authority – (1 Pt 3:1-7)

- Husbands and wives are family officers. While as a family officer, the wife must yield to her husband’s leadership role. They both will answer to God for how they fulfill the responsibilities and privileges of their offices.
- Unsaved men are influenced by a wife who respects and honors her husband’s office through not attempting to overthrow it but by cooperating with it (v 1-2)
- Feminine beauty begins inwardly and never outwardly (v 3-6)
- Peter says to husbands about their responsibility toward their wives “in the same manner” meaning in no less way than a woman is to fulfill her role you are to fulfill your role. (v 7)
- Husbands are commanded to “dwell” or “live” with their wives. That word is (*sunoikeo*) which means, more fully, “make a home together”. (v 7)

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Dwell according to “knowledge” (v 7) – refers to the responsibility of the husband to understand, in as an exhaustive a manner as possible, all of the strengths and weaknesses of his wife and set up a policy and practice that will exploit, to the greatest benefit of the family, her strengths and minimize as much as possible the impact of her weaknesses.

This also means that involvement with friends, pastimes and hobbies that have a detrimental effect on the execution of your office must be resolved. This may also include legitimate demands on your time such as work or even church. This does not mean every family will be the same with identical adjustments but it does mean family officers (with emphasis on the CO but not to the exclusion of the XO) you will answer to God for the choices made and their results so you must always audit the condition of your family.

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The Good Life
Royal Conduct and Royal Suffering
1 Peter 3:8-22

I. Principles of Royal Conduct (v 8-12)

A. *Good living with one another* (v 8)

- harmony – (*homophrón*) same mentality/disposition, this is accomplished through the Word of God.
- sympathetic – (*sumpathés*) understanding other’s difficulties
- brotherly love – (*philadelphos*) friendship love of the brothers (based in Christ), this is not social compatibility but spiritual camaraderie

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–compassionate – (*eusplagchnos*) literally “good bowels” it means to have empathy. The reference to the organs is because for Greeks, this is where these things were often felt (empathy causes certain physical reactions, often in the bowels). The point being is to have the kind of empathy that might evoke this.

–friendly/courteous/humble – (*philophrón*) a mentality of friendship love that seeks to display itself or extend itself

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B. Responding to evil treatment (v9) – the believer must understand the distinction between valid and invalid responses to evil.

First, there are valid responses to many things that are evil which are often interpreted as “evil for evil” but are not, though they may seem severe. You must understand the context you are in and what principles apply.

Secondly, this prescription is not being given to governments nor to any other institution, rather it is being prescribed to individual believers in the context of suffering for the sake of Christ and responding in the context of a believer. Therefore:

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Ex 1: When someone invades your home to do you evil for the sake of committing a crime, you are Biblically free to defend yourself and kill them if necessary, this is not viewed as rendering evil for evil since this act of self-defense is not evil. However, even in this case your response is limited to a valid context. You may not further your self-defense beyond its valid boundaries. For example, after incapacitating the criminal you may not torture him or her in order to get back at them though this thought may seem pleasing.

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Ex 2: You are serving the Lord in a church. Someone does not like the way you do things and gossips about you. You are to treat them, still, with kindness (with blessing), respect and so on. Now this does not mean there are not valid avenues for addressing the gossip and gossiper or that you are wrong for using them, not at all. But there is one avenue that is forbidden, getting back at them, returning their evil with your own evil concoction.

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C. The reward of the Royal response (v9)

Notice what the end of the verse says, that you were called to this so that you may, “inherit a blessing”. Remember the Bema Seat of Christ where believers are judged for reward? You have the opportunity, here and now, to live your life so that you may participate in receiving these rewards.

But right here is a pivotal moment that requires your attention because right here is where the mechanics of the Christian life is best illustrated and must be repeated by you with the rest of God's Word. Let me explain.

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When you are mistreated or treated evilly you have a choice. Either respond based on your own senses and own resources or based on God's Word *through faith*. It takes faith to do this. As Peter said, you cannot see our Lord Jesus but God has made a promise that if you will act according to his Word instead of acting according to sight you will inherit a blessing which comes at the Bema Seat of Christ; it is then you are living out, by faith, the Christian life. To act according to this portion of Scripture, where you do not render evil for evil but with blessing, is the fundamental mechanics of the Christian life. You believe the Word and rest in trust upon it more than yourself and your plan for life.

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D. The conditions of Royal living (v 10-12) – remember, the good life for the Christian is not attained by the methods of the world. The world has its way of dealing with things in which it prescribes certain attitudes and actions be taken in order for you to find yourself in a place that, according to the world, you may say you are *living the good life*.

Here, Peter reveals to us that the good life is based in living God's way through approaching life and responding to life God's way. The Christian who attempts to live life based on the world's principles will be miserable. This does not mean he or she will not gain some form of perceived material wealth, notoriety and so on that are the normal accoutrements of worldly success. But still, he or she will be miserable. Their inner life will be a wreck, their soul in turmoil and their mind filled with constant tension because of living *contra* to God's plan. And they may never admit it to you, in their pride, but that is what is going on.

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Two main things to observe, your responsibility and God's responsibility in Royal living:

Your responsibility (v10-11)

Keep your tongue from evil, Keep your lips from deceitful speech, turn from evil, do good

Seek and pursue peace (it does not happen on its own. Often, you must find a way to produce this in whatever context you are which means not being unnecessarily provocative)

God's Responsibility (Judge) (v 12)

Here, an *anthropomorphism* is used. God does not have eyes and ears, literally, but is using human properties to communicate that he sees and hears all. And those that are living with evil in mind, he is against your cause. But those living with righteousness in mind, he is attentive to your prayers. He is talking to believers, here.

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II. Principles for suffering as a Royal Priest (v 13-22)

- A. Living right guards against suffering (v13)
- B. But if you do suffer for righteousness (the Christian life) your response should be one that receives it with positively (v 14)
- C. Christ is your hope when you suffer as such, a hope the world does not have. He is your stability and the cause for which you may have poise, confidence and great hope in suffering for the Christian life (v 14-15)
- D. The world will not understand why you can be poised, confident and full of great hope in such suffering and will ask how and why; you are to be prepared to tell them why, because of Christ (v15)

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- E. The believer is to keep a clear conscience during such suffering. What this means is that now that you have expressed and demonstrated your trust in Christ in your suffering, you may not, in the midst of it, change course and decide that you need a bit of vengeance and embark on a campaign to get such people back, this will give you a guilty conscience. Your suffering is part of a testimony or witness to the world of God's sufficiency (v 16)
- F. The world considers suffering that is deserved to be better than undeserved suffering. But God teaches us that our undeserved suffering, for living the Christian life, is actually better than suffering for something we have done wrong. Why? Obviously because we do not want to be doing things that are wrong enough to result in being punished and certainly not some form of punishment visible to the eyes of others. But more importantly, there is no blessing in such suffering but as we learned earlier, when we suffer for the cause of Christ there is reward that awaits us and blessedness, even now (v17)

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In the next verses, 18- 22, Peter is about to connect the suffering of Christ to our suffering. He is going to lay out Christ's suffering and some subsequent events after his suffering along with the end results of his suffering and again, does so in a way that ties it to ours. If you look in verse 18 he moves from talking about our suffering to that of Christ's, he ties the two together. Your suffering for living the Christian life *is not an event unto itself* but is *directly connected to Christ's suffering*. Just as our Lord taught, (John 15:18) "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."

And during this appeal to us that we should always view our suffering as connected to Christ, we come across a curiously described event of Christ after his death and before his ascension to heaven. And we will now examine this to help you understand what is being said:

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III. Jesus preaching to the spirits in prison (v 18-20) (NIV)

18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

19 through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison 20 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.

There are three main schools of interpretation regarding the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison. The following are, in part, from Bibliotheca Sacra 139 (1982) 146-158. Copyright © 1982 by Dallas Theological Seminary. Selected Studies from 1 Peter, by D. Edmond Heibert.

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- A. The most recent identification sees a reference to the men alive after Pentecost to whom the gospel was preached by Christ through the apostles, men in a natural prison house of bondage to sin and Satan.

Problem: However, such a highly figurative interpretation of "prison" is contrary to the prevailing meaning of the term in the New Testament as a place of confinement for criminals, real or supposed.

Also, the preaching by the Apostles was done for an extended period and the verb, "went" is not normally used for such an extended period or event.

Thirdly, if these were men who were alive after Pentecost, the passage describes them as those who "disobeyed long ago". It contradicts the plain reading.

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- B. Another view, which goes back at least as far as Augustine is that these spirits who are now in prison are the disembodied souls of the people who perished in the Flood, and that the pre-incarnate Christ preached to them through Noah, warning them of the coming disaster and urging them to repent. This view found wide acceptance in the medieval Western church and has strong advocates today.

In other words, when Noah preached to these people over a long period of time while he built the boat, we are to understand that it was the pre-incarnate Christ preaching to them through Noah.

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Problem: The first problem, like the earlier one, is the kind of time required which contradicts word use. It says "he went and proclaimed". The view in the verbs is not an extended period but an event.

Secondly, it says "he went" and refers specifically to Christ. If we are to view this as occurring after his death and before he ascension which is precisely the context, then to qualify "he went" as actually not being our Lord, Christ, going anywhere but that via Noah -way way back- is what is really meant, is to convolute the normal reading of the passage. It is to force meanings on words that do not fit.

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C. A third view, apparently the oldest, identifies these "spirits in prison" with fallen angels, equated with "the sons of God" in **Genesis 6**. This view was widely known and generally taken for granted in the apostolic age. It is strongly presented in the Book of Enoch, a composite pre-Christian, Jewish apocryphal writing widely known in the early Christian church., This view fell into disfavor with the fourth-century church.

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Why this view possess for more strength:

The normative reading of the text indicates it was our Lord, himself, and not through Noah, who went somewhere. As well, it tells us where, a prison where spirits are kept. It describes those spirits and those spirits are referred to in other places in Scripture which point to this understanding of the passage.

2 Peter 2:4-5

Jude v6

The proclamation. One must ask, what was it our Lord would have proclaimed to these remarkably disobedient angels and why? To understand this one must understand what our Lord accomplished and what it was they, these extraordinarily evil demons, attempted to do.

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Our Lord redeemed mankind and the only way this was possible was to be our genetic representative which he accomplished. And the subversion of the demons (sons of God) in Genesis 6 was to attempt to corrupt the genetic line of humanity, thereby prohibiting Christ a legitimate lineage and valid genetic representation as the second Adam. Hence, our Lord went to tell them that just what they sought to sabotage failed and "it is finished"

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Your suffering is a victorious suffering connected to Christ's and is promised reward. This is the Royal context of our suffering and must understand its connectivity to Christ, his suffering and ultimate victory in order to have a right perspective in our suffering for living the Christian life.