

It is my great joy to invite you to open the infallible record of the Word of God to 1 Peter as we continue our verse by verse study of this wonderful epistle. Before we look at the text, let me invite you to think with me a bit. Most people I know that are not Christians are people that live without any hope. They have no meaning in their life, no purpose for living, no assurance of life after death, no excitement about coming to that last moment of their life and anticipating the glories that await them because they know nothing of any of this. Life is a prison of despair and despondency for most people. People will therefore employ any means available to them to alleviate the pain of their hopelessness. You see it in the way they live, hear it in their voice, read it in their philosophies. The world offers many things to alleviate the pain: drugs, alcohol, pornography, work, materialism, entertainment, and of course the greatest of all, false religions.

I think of the terrorists we are so familiar with these days. I believe hopelessness is what drives them. Deceived by a false religion, they worship a false god that does not exist, a god they call Allah. Their life is spent suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, trying to silence their conscience, trying to deny the ache within their soul that screams the absence of genuine faith and a genuine relationship with the real God. Of course this makes them susceptible to any movement that will give them identity, purpose, meaning in life, and offer them some hope for future blessing. Suicide bombers in countries that are lost in their hopelessness are perceived to be the most honored of all people. In fact, the PLO-controlled newspaper in Palestine continues to print what they call ‘wedding announcements’ for their recently departed terrorist sons, whose martyrdom by killing innocent people has now been rewarded by a harem of dark-eyed virgins in paradise. People are invited to join in the celebration. Of course it’s all a colossal, satanic lie, but it’s a lie that people buy because they’re hopeless and deceived.

Now this reality of hopelessness reaches far beyond the boundaries of Islam. It includes anyone who has not placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I was thinking about this issue of hopelessness. I have to admit I got rather depressed for several hours while I did a search on the internet for sites concerning hopelessness. You’d be surprised how many there are. I thought I would share one quote, the lyrics of a hopeless song that’s called “Waiting for the Fog.” It was written by a band—one of many out there—called *Hopelessness*. Needless to say, their website is very dark and foreboding. This particular song is off their album entitled, “Broken Tears in Solitude.” These lyrics, sadly, summarize well the hopelessness of people without Christ. Here’s what the lyrics say.

“The whispering breeze waits for its dimension quiet and still. I can’t see the path where it wants to drive me. With other empty souls I meet inside the darkness. I feel I’m getting in its dominion, my mind won’t answer for me anymore.

Madness is getting closer, I can't help me. It's defecting me.

This destiny, so unbearable. So broken off. Is helping me dig my tomb. While I'm right to the middle of his inferno.

It's destroying my loner self. I feel impotence in this situation. I'm inside his trap. It's hunted me. Immersed in his kingdom of power I fell. I couldn't get out.

Trapped in the start like a tumor, knowing there's no forgiveness in this field of tombs. Waiting for the fog to catch me."

Such is the lament of people who are without Christ, people who are slaves to sin, people who are unwittingly worshiping their father the devil, the father of lies who disguises himself as an angel of light. They have no hope, no joy, no meaning in life, only the gnawing reality that their soul is doomed for something horrible, something beyond their imagination. We see this very type of thing in God's description in His Word describing the character of the lost, the wicked. Let me give you a few of these we find in Scripture. Those without Christ are characterized as: abominable, alienated from God, blasphemous, blinded, boastful, conspiring against God's people, covetous, deceitful, destructive, disobedient, enticing to evil, envious, fearful, foolish, forgetting God, glorying in their shame, hard-hearted, hating the light, headstrong and haughty, hostile to God, hypocritical, ignorant of God, lovers of pleasure more than of God, murderous, prayerless, persecuting, perverse, proud, selfish, sensual, sold under sin, ungodly and unholy, to mention but a few.

Of course one of the major descriptions of people without Christ is that they're children of the devil, God tells us. In fact, Scripture reminds us that they are accursed children, adversaries of the Lord, children of vile men, children of transgression, children in whom is no faith, children of the flesh, children of iniquity, children who will not hear the law of the Lord, children of pride, children of wrath, sons of the wicked one, sons of hell, sons of fools, sons of disobedience, sons of this world and sons of wickedness. The Lord said in Matthew 8:12, "But the sons of the kingdom," referring to Satan's kingdom, "will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Peter reminds us in 2 Peter 2:17 that, "These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

What a graphic depiction of hopelessness. Now that I've got you dark and depressed, let me give you the good news. Because of God's grace, we have inconceivably glorious hope. We see this in Peter's words. You would think that Peter, of all people, knowing that he is about to be crucified (because God has told him so) would be a man filled with hopelessness, gloom and despair. Instead he is a man filled with inexpressible, transcendent joy and peace. His hope was in the Lord, and those who hope in the Lord

receive God's intimate care. The Psalmist says in Psalm 33:18, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His mercy."

William Gurnall, an old Puritan, has written this about hope. "Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolation, that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called 'the rejoicing of hope' (Hebrews 3:6). Truly, hope is the saint's covering, wherein he wraps himself, when he lays his body down to sleep in the grave: 'My flesh,' saith David, 'shall rest in hope.'" I remember when I read that, my heart broke forth in that great song that we sing so often:

"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand."

Here in this text Peter encourages the persecuted saints scattered around Asia Minor. Those that are spiritual aliens, as we are, in a hostile world. He encourages them by reminding them of the living hope that they have, that *we* have, in our eternal inheritance. This is a hymn of praise that we're going to look at in verses 3-5. It's a hymn of praise, a joyous doxology, something that flows from the heart. It's an overflowing of joy and praise, a passionate sense of giving God glory. In this hymn of praise we have an opportunity to allow our hearts to soar beyond the swamps and sewers of our earthly existence into the glorious heights of our heavenly home and reflect upon those magnificent glories. I pray that as we have the privilege of examining this song of triumph and applying it to our hearts that we will become more preoccupied with the hope that is ours. It's so easy to live our life without this preoccupation.

Let me ask you, last week as you were living your life, how much did you think about what awaits you in glory? How much time did you spend reflecting upon all of the blessings of your inheritance? It's easy to take it for granted and to live as if what we have in this life, on this earth, is all there is. When you think that way and live consistently with that misplaced priority and way of thinking, you literally forfeit blessing in your life and perhaps even reward in heaven. Here is the text. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I would draw your attention to four elements of our hope that I pray will fan the flames of spiritual praise within your heart and enrich your understanding of the unspeakable benefits of our salvation. We're going

to look at four things: the *source* of our hope, the *power* of our hope, the *promise* of our hope and the *certainty* of our hope.

First of all, think of the source of our hope that Peter reminds us of here in verse 3. He said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope.” Here in this text we see the source of our hope, the One we should bless, the One we should offer our praise to because of all that is ours; to the God, the one and only God, further identified here as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s important to be reminded that repeatedly throughout Scripture Jesus called God His Father, indicating His own deity, indicating the fact that He shares His Father’s nature. He is one and the same. He is, as we would say in theological circles, *consubstantial*. He shares the same essence as the Father. The entire triune godhead shares the same essence. Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies of the Father. He is therefore coequal and coeternal with the Father. Jesus said in John 10:30, “I and the Father are one.” And in John 14:9 Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

What’s amazing is that when you understand the fatherhood of God in Scripture, you see that first of all indeed He is Father of all that is in creation, that He is the Creator. In Ephesians 4:6 we read that, “(there is) one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.” So to that extent He is even the Father as Creator of people that do not believe in Him. But He is only the spiritual Father to those who believe. You must understand, we are not all God’s children. In Romans 8:14-15 it says, “(only those) who are being led by the Spirit of God...are sons of God...(only believers) have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’” Later in verse 17 it says “...(for this reason we believers are) heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”

Indeed, the Father saves from sin all those who come to Him through Jesus Christ, and He adopts us as His own children at the moment of our new birth and He makes us His spiritual children. In fact, we read in John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” Beloved, first we see that *the source of our hope is our heavenly Father who is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ*. It’s important to understand that no one can possibly know God the Father apart from knowing the Son. Jesus said in John 14:6-7, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My father also.”

I want to add something. As we think about the Father, the source of our glorious hope, the One who has caused us to be born again, what's fascinating and profoundly humbling to me is that according to Jesus' words in John 6:44, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him." The word draw in the original language means to irresistibly compel, to take possession of something. It could be translated to drag something, kicking and screaming. "No one can come to me," Jesus said, "unless the Father who sent Me draws him." Or you could even say drags him, irresistibly compels him. That same term is used in Acts 16:19 of Paul and Silas who were "*seized and dragged*...into the market place before the authorities." Likewise it's used in James 2:6 speaking of the "rich who oppress you and personally *drag* you into court." That's the concept.

As a footnote, this divine dragging, this drawing of the Father, is one of many doctrines that refutes the notion of what is called prevenient grace. We see this in some Arminian circles. It's the idea that God gives a preparing grace, that He dispenses this grace to everyone and empowers the sinner to exercise his free will to respond to the gospel invitation, causing a synergism whereby grace cooperates with free will. This is something that is not found in Scripture. It is a philosophical notion that has been added to guard against what they would believe to be the danger of making God completely sovereign over salvation and denying man's free will. Friends, again, Scripture is very clear that man's will is enslaved in his sinful nature. He has no desire to exercise his will apart from divine enablement. Therefore the Father's got to drag him. It's the Father that has to do the drawing. The Father's drawing is selective in that He draws or compels all He has sovereignly chosen in eternity past, and it's also efficacious, meaning that it produces the desired effect, namely repentance and salvation.

Think of it this way, and this is why Peter is so excited as he encourages the beleaguered saints of the first century, he's saying it's like dead men buried in a swamp of sin, utterly unable to help ourselves. The Father dragged us out of the filth and mire of sin and breathed into us spiritual life and cleaned us up and made us righteous. What a glorious thought. Why did the Father draw us to Himself? Back to 1 Peter 1:3, "...according to His great mercy." That God is merciful is such a precious thought. Mercy is literally God's love in action, God's goodness or benevolence that He lavishes upon us. Many times the word mercy is translated lovingkindness. Mercy is a little bit different than grace. Mercy changes our *condition*, but grace changes our *position*. To expand on that, mercy addresses the misery of our state, while grace deals with our guilt and the sin that has corrupted us and left us in the dreadful condition in which we find ourselves apart from Christ.

Misery accompanies sin like stench accompanies a corpse. Wherever you see sin, wherever you see people that are without Christ, you're going to find misery. You show me a man without Christ and I'll show you a man who is miserable, who is hopeless. He is going to be desperate to deny that. He will be committed to every imaginable opportunity to free himself from the reality of his hopelessness. But believe me, in the middle of the night when he awakens and no one is around, and it's just him before his Creator, he is suppressing the truth in unrighteousness, he is hopeless, and he is afraid.

Now, think of the misery of our condition before we came to Christ; that condition that was alleviated by the Father's mercy. As we look at Scripture we read that we are spiritually dead, enslaved by sin, enemies of God, slaves of the kingdom of darkness, ruled by, as Ephesians 2 says, the "prince and the power of the air" (Satan). It goes on to say that we "lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath... But God being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ." That is mercy. Because He is merciful, the Father reached down and lifted us out of the wretched sewer of our sinful state. In His grace He changes our position. He declares us righteous because of the righteousness of Christ. Because of this great mercy, we have hope. Our heavenly Father had mercy upon us. He dragged us out of the pit when we were unwilling and unable to come on our own. Not only did He drag us out, He lavished us with undeserved love and every imaginable spiritual blessing. Therefore we can echo the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 106:1, "Praise ye the **LORD**! Oh give thanks unto the **LORD**; for His mercy (lovingkindness) endureth forever."

1 Peter begins by reminding people of the *source of their hope*. Then secondly of the *power of our hope*, "...according to His great mercy He has caused us to be born again to a living hope." Herein is the power. He caused us to be born again. This is the miracle of the new birth, that transformation that occurs at regeneration. As Jesus said in John 3:8, this is that time when "we are born of the Spirit." I reminded you before of Titus 3:5, where we have a description of the new birth in the human soul and spirit. It says, "He saved us...by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." Regeneration can be translated as "born again", or "new birth."

As I told you before, regeneration is that instantaneous and supernatural impartation of spiritual life to the spiritually dead, that impartation of the life of God that eternally transforms a person, that eternally transforms the governing disposition of a man. The old things pass away and we become a new creature. When you look at a new creature in Christ you see a person that loves to be with God's people, that loves to worship with God's people corporately, that loves to serve in the body and use their gifts. They will

have an insatiable appetite for the Word of God, have a secret devotion to God, they will long to share their faith with other people, they will have spiritual discernment, they will live to the glory of God and on it goes. This is the stuff of genuine saving faith because there has been a transformation, a regeneration. They have been born again. The Father has done this according to His great mercy. The result is that we're born again to a living hope.

James 1:18 says, "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth." The verb there can also be rendered "to give birth." He gave us birth. How did He do it? It says, "by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures." This is an amazing, yet unseen, miracle, this regeneration. In fact, later on Peter says in 2 Peter 1:4 that in Christ we "become partakers of the divine nature." That's part of this new birth. It's the new nature that we have that then empowers us and energizes us eternally and therefore sustains the hope within us. The Holy Spirit sparks the flame within us.

Later on in 1 Peter 1:23 Peter says, "...you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is through the living and abiding word of God." Literally what he's saying is that the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to produce this miraculous new birth, and the spiritual life that is then planted within us by the Holy Spirit is unfailing and permanent. Think of it this way: our divine nature that the Father has caused to happen through the Holy Spirit through this new birth is like an eternal fuel cell that empowers us to live for His glory and to never lose hope that His promises will ever fail. No matter how bad life gets, because of this living hope that we have, we continue to rejoice.

I think of Job's words in chapter 19:25. With his world falling apart he says, "I know that my Redeemer lives." He doesn't say, "I think He does" or "I'm pretty sure He does" or "I kind of think He does" or "I hope He does." He says, "I *know* that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold And whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!" He was so excited about it. Now, how can he have such confidence? *Because he's been given a new life.* The Holy Spirit of God bears witness to these holy truths in his heart, and in the heart of everyone who has placed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I find it fascinating that Peter calls our faith here a *living hope*. What's the opposite of something that's living? Something that's dead, or dying. We don't have a dying hope. We have a living hope that stirs us to action, that is purifying, something that excites us. True believers are going to be motivated servants. They are going to have a living hope.

It's going to be contagious. When you're around them you're going to see it and feel it and taste it and touch it. They're going to be passionate and zealous for Christ. They're going to be fervent. They can't wait to tell others what God has done in their life. They can't wait to get into the Word and understand more of who God is. There's been such a transformation in their life that they're enthusiastic about spiritual growth and their church and heaven. They will be encouragers and exhorters and equippers. If that's not you, there's something wrong with your spiritual life.

Sometimes I see people, even in this church, that seem to have a dying hope rather than a living hope. Any man who calls himself a Christian yet practices some private religion in isolation, any man or woman that refuses to worship corporately with the saints and serve with the saints, that refuses to be part of a local body and discover and develop their spiritual gifts and put the Spirit of God on display does not have a living hope. A person with a living hope is one that other Christians love to be around because life begets life. You can be around this type of person and their whole world can be disintegrating and falling apart, and what do they say? They encourage you! "Be of good cheer! God is in control. I trust Him completely. I have a living hope. Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice." How does this happen to a person? Peter says in verse 3 that "...His great mercy has caused (this to happen.)" He has caused us to be *born again*, to be transformed, to have a new birth, a living hope. Child of God, what power we possess in our new nature! In fact it's the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Look at verse 3, it's "...a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

May I remind you, in Philippians 3:10 Paul was longing for a more intimate knowledge of the power and person of Christ. He says, "that I may know Him and the *power* of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings." We must understand that if Christ had not been risen, we would have no hope. Our hope is living because our Savior is living. That's the idea. He's seated at the right hand of the Father. He intercedes on our behalf. He lives within us. The triune godhead lives within us. We are united to God through Christ. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:17, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." But, since we are united with Christ, whatever happened to Him will also happen to us. He was resurrected, raised from the dead: so too will we. Death has no dominion over us. How can I say that with such authority? Because I am united with Christ and He was raised from the dead. Therefore we have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." That's a living hope.

So Peter encourages all the spiritual aliens, ourselves included, by reminding us of the *source* and *power* of our hope. But notice also the *promise* of our hope. We do not hope in something that is trivial or mundane. We're not hoping to go to the Cheatham County Fair next week. In verse 4, we hope "to obtain an inheritance." An *inheritance*! The word denotes property or possession. Spurgeon has said it so well. I love what he said regarding this. He said, "God has been pleased in His abundant mercy to prepare for His people an inheritance. He has made them sons, and if children, then heirs. He has given them a new life, and if a new life, then there must be possessions and a place suitable for that new life. A heavenly nature requires a heavenly inheritance, heaven-born children must have a heavenly portion." I understand that the new life that God has given me, the longings of my heart and so forth, cannot be fully enjoyed in this current state. Likewise for all believers. We're not made for this existence. We are citizens of another kingdom. That's where our inheritance will be.

Let me speak to this heavenly portion for a moment. In Colossians 1:12 Paul says, "give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Here Paul is reaching back into the Old Testament by alluding to the specific land allotments given to the Israelites when they entered into Canaan to possess it. We read about that in Numbers 26 and 33. The word inheritance here literally means "a portion of the lot." We have an inheritance. It's part of something. It's as though our names are written on something that belongs to us, a possession that is ours. In Colossians 1:12 he's saying that the Father "has qualified (authorized) us (according to His grace) to share in the inheritance of the saints in light," light being a synonym for the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. It will be in this glorious kingdom that each believer will be given a specific portion of the total divine inheritance. We don't know what that will include. But it's a marvelous thought in and of itself. The language helps us understand that perhaps it has to do with possessions, privileges, spiritual blessings beyond our ability to comprehend. When you think about this, all of the problems of this life begin to pale into insignificance. That was exactly Peter's motivation through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: to lift the hearts of these beleaguered saints.

We read more on this inheritance in Colossians 3:24. It says, "know that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance." No wonder Paul would say, "For me to live is Christ but to die is gain." In Ephesians 1:11 Paul said, "(because of our Father's great mercy) we have obtained an inheritance." Hebrews 9:15 says, "those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Peter is trying to encourage those persecuted saints to fix their eyes on the *eternal*, not the *temporal*, to look beyond it all. Paul admonished the Colossian believers in a similar manner. In Colossians 3:1-2 he says, "If you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the

things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

It's so sad—and I have to deal with this so often—believers should have this living hope if they're genuinely born again. Maybe they don't understand their inheritance and all that means, but for whatever reason you don't see a living hope manifested in their lives, you see a dying hope. They remind me of Eeyore on Winnie the Pooh. Everything is dark and gloomy. You spend about five minutes with them and you want to go shoot yourself. When I get around very pessimistic, whining, morose types of believers, especially when I counsel them, I first of all ask them to write down what types of things preoccupy their mind. (Of course I'm giving this all away to you, so if you ever come to me in that type of condition you're going to know where I'm going). What I'm trying to do is prove to them that all they think about is the junk, the negative stuff in their life. After I ask them that question they immediately start spitting out all of this stuff with passion, things that might have happened thirty years ago as if it happened yesterday. After about five minutes of it I want to go jump off a bridge, it is so negative. Then you ask them what God would have them focus on. The answer is found in the text we're looking at. *He wants you to focus on your inheritance!* As Paul said in Philippians 4:8, we're to let our mind dwell on things that are “true...honorable...right...pure ... lovely...of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”

Peter was passionate about this even in the face of an excruciating death by crucifixion. I want you to notice three characteristics about this in verse 4, it is “...imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away.” *Imperishable* means that it is not subject to corruption or destruction. It has no capacity to decay. It has no vulnerability to death. No one can steal or destroy it. It's also *undefiled* which means it's unstained, unpolluted. Imagine living in a world where sin is no longer present. It means uncontaminated by sin. It also says it will not *fade away*. That has the idea of not diminishing in its beauty or majesty. Unlike a rose that might blossom and show forth its splendor for a few hours, the magnificent glories of heaven will never fade away or diminish. What splendor awaits us—all because of the Father's mercy, who drew us unto Himself.

“Ahh,” the skeptic says, “But what must I do to ensure that someday I will be able to lay claim to my inheritance? What if, in my sin, I forfeit it? What if, in my pride, I exchange it, or in my stupidity I renounce it?” Dear friends, you must understand that you can do no more to lose it than you could to gain it. It's all of grace and herein is the fourth point of this text.

We have the certainty of hope. Notice in verse 4 it says at the end, “(it is) *reserved* in heaven for you.” The term reserved is a military term. It connotes the idea of a garrison of soldiers that vigilantly guards and defends a precious possession that belongs to someone else. The grammar indicates that this is something that already exists and is being carefully guarded. That’s what our inheritance is, something that exists—your portion of the lot exists right now. It’s being carefully guarded by Almighty God, by His angelic hosts. Therefore, neither the enemy of our souls nor all of his minions, his demonic hosts, nor any human being can ever break through and steal, or corrupt the inheritance that is ours in Christ. Nor could our own foolishness ever forfeit, exchange or renounce our salvation.

Why? Verse 5 says that our inheritance in heaven is reserved and “protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” Notice the shift here—it’s very important that you see this, especially those of you who have been deceived by the error that you can somehow lose your salvation. Not only is our inheritance reserved and protected by God in heaven, but it shifts here to *we who are the recipients of that inheritance*, it says “who” in other words we the saints, “are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

This is eternal security. It is God who, as Jude says in verse 24, is the One “who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.” He is the One that causes that to happen. If it was left up to us we would blow it. For this reason the apostle Paul could say in Philippians 1:6, “I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” And Paul expressed this same unwavering confidence of his future inheritance to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:18 where it says, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

We come back to Peter’s words here, powerful words of encouragement that I believe should forever silence those who insist that salvation is not eternal or that believers can lose their salvation—because after all the human will remains free and can therefore rescind its earlier faith in Christ by choosing to apostatize. Again, Scripture is clear: *true believers have been given eternal life*. It is eternal life. It’s been given to us as a *present possession*. Moreover, *it is kept secure by Christ*, according to the Lord’s words in John 10:28, and as we see here in 1 Peter 1:5, by the power of God through faith. I don’t know about you, but that’s a vault that I can put my trust in.

In fact in Ephesians 2:8 we read, “For by grace you have been saved.” The grammar helps us understand and can be translated this way, “You are having been saved.” In

other words, salvation is a past event with continuing results in the present. It is something that God has initiated and will sustain and will ultimately consummate. This is the absolute certainty of our hope and therefore a profound encouragement. Our inheritance is secure because our salvation is secure.

Based on this, how silly would it be for someone to say, “Oh my, we’ve seen a number of people this year lose their salvation.”

Therefore God has to say to the angels that are with Him (preserving and protecting our inheritance), “We’ve lost 250 believers today. They have apostatized today, so no sense guarding their portion any more.” I don’t know what God does with their portion, maybe He divvies it up with the rest of the people that are still saved.

Maybe what He has to say is, “We’ve reserved this for these people in heaven, but since they’ve apostatized now I guess maybe what we need to do is put it on hold until eventually they die, because they may repent and get saved again.”

To which the angels reply, “But God, we thought it was *You* who initiated salvation and who gave them a new nature and who made them a new creation and who secured and protected all that is theirs in Christ.”

To which God would have to reply, “Well, that is unfortunately a mistaken notion, because after all, it is not necessarily *Me* who is in charge of salvation. I’m in charge of everything else, I’m sovereign over all else, but I’m not in charge of salvation. Ultimately it is man’s free will that has the capacity to do as he pleases when he pleases.” (So much for regeneration).

“But God, we thought that they were given the new nature of Christ. That they were made to be partakers of the new nature.”

“Well, yes, but now they’ve decided they don’t want that anymore, so that new nature is no longer the new nature and they’re back to the old nature.”

Dear friends, we are united to Christ. We are His possession. Therefore, as it says in this text and so many others, our salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time. What is the last time? It’s a reference to the final end of redemptive history. The rapture will take place first, then the second coming of Christ, then the millennial kingdom. At that time there will be a renovation of the earth back to Edenic splendor. At the end of the millennial kingdom there will be the recreation of the heavens and the earth—a new heaven and a new earth. It will be at that point that we will experience the fullness of

our inheritance. Those that have gone on before us experience some of it now, but not all of it yet. Of course our greatest joy will be God Himself. As the Psalmist said in 16:11, “In Thy presence is fullness of joy forevermore. In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.”

Is there any wonder that Peter began this letter to those spiritually and physically persecuted spiritual aliens by reminding them in his salutation of the triumphant truths of their election. Reminding them they have been chosen, sanctified, sealed and blessed. Then on the basis of that his heart explodes into this doxology where he says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead who obtained an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, you who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” A doxology that helps them and us understand the *source* of our hope, the *power* of our hope, the *promise* of our hope and the *confidence* of our hope.

I challenge you to do as Peter has asked us all to do in verse 3: to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give Him praise. Will you do that? Could I ask you to examine your heart and ask, “Father, how can I bless You more? How can I show more gratitude to You? How can I praise You more? What can I do?” Of course the answer is that you can pray more, serve more, give more, sing more, do more to manifest a living hope and therefore join in Peter’s great doxology of hope.

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