1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

I Peter

1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

to the foreigners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

to the elect

1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,

by the sanctifying work of the Spirit,

for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure.

The above is my translation of the Greek text. The word order and layout are to bring out certain grammatical points that may be lost in smoother translations.

The Historical Setting

In order to strengthen its rule over newly conquered territories, the Roman Empire developed an aggressive method of colonization whereby Roman language, culture, and politics would be introduced through the colonizers. Through colonization of conquered peoples, Rome could also establish a military presence and foster commerce between distant places and the empire.

Colonization was done by sending 300 or more colonists who had cultural and political loyalties to Rome into a new area. The colonists benefited from colonization, for it promoted a socioeconomic opportunity that would otherwise be unavailable in Rome. Roman slaves were often given citizenship and homesteading land, and their families then would become leaders in the community. At the same time, not all were given citizenship, and it was not uncommon for Rome to deport groups of troublemakers, or to banish people from their lands for no apparent reason at all. They would also move people when there was a need to decrease the population in a specific area. For example, during the reign of Augustus, all foreigners except doctors and teachers were banished from Rome to ease the pressure of famine in the area. Decisions on who would be banished were often based on ethnicity, religion, or occupation, but the common feature of them all was that the “banished” were those considered to be foreigners.

Not only were the banished people considered to be foreigners, but they were also considered foreigners when they arrived at their destinations. Colonists had the power of Rome backing them politically and militarily and often benefited from the confiscation of the resources of a region when they moved in and displaced native populations. Even people who were Roman citizens in Rome were not always considered Roman citizens in the city they ended up in, so they would have to earn the privilege or buy it in their new setting.
Disputed entitlements, such as land rights, were one way that the problem of “foreignness” played itself out. From the perspective of the colonists, those who already lived on the land they were colonizing were simply considered squatters and had few rights.

Rome not only brought with it a new political system that decided who would be a citizen and who wouldn’t be, but they brought their gods with them as well. Though they generally tolerated other religions, anyone who publically rejected Roman deities or tried to convert Romans was considered a troublemaker and could be expelled or punished. (see Jobes for details, 28-44).

Therefore, Peter (see Davids, 45-46 and Hiebert, 31-32 on who Peter is) was writing to Christians scattered around Asia Minor who were in many ways refugees. They were considered enemies of the Roman Empire and had lost their rights as citizens in the land where they had lived. Not only that, they lost their property, lost their freedom, and in many cases, lost their lives. In addition, many of those with Jewish backgrounds had been disinherited and disowned and abandoned by their own families.

The author of Hebrews describes the condition of believers in the OT in similar ways:

“... they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.” (Heb. 11:37b – 38)

Peter used this disorienting experience to teach them that as Christians, they were also foreigners in another sense – wherever they lived, whatever they did, whatever their social status or occupation, they would discover that their customs and values would always conflict with those of the dominant society.

The Purpose of the Letter

The purpose of I Peter is clearly stated in the last paragraph of the letter: “I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!” (5:12) In other words, Peter wants to encourage and sustain his readers to remain faithful to Christ in the midst of severe suffering and persecution. The first cycle of exhortations (1:1-2:10) is grounded in the readers’ identity in Christ and their personal experience of salvation.

Foreigners

“Peter uses the term ‘foreigner’ to distance his readers from the hold their society may have over them. Nevertheless, Peter does not call them to withdraw from society, but will instead present Christian engagement with society in the mode that might be expected of foreigners who wish to maintain their identity of origin. That is, foreigners dwell respectively in their host nation, but participate in its culture only to the extent that its values and customs coincide with their own that they wish to preserve. In this way, the salutation of the letter introduces a concept of a differentiated engagement
Foreigners of the Diaspora

Peter doesn’t just call his addressees “foreigners,” but “foreigners of the diaspora.” (see map in note 6) Although the Greek word διασπορά (diaspora) is related to the verb διασπέρω (diaspeiro - meaning “to scatter”), it was a technical term found only in Jewish literature referring to the Jewish population living outside of Israel after they had been taken into captivity by the regional superpowers of Babylon and Assyria. (The scattering of the Jews throughout the world is called the Diaspora). Calvin, therefore, believes that “this can apply only to the Jews, not only because they were banished from their own country and scattered here and there, but also because they had been driven out of that land which had been promised to them by the Lord as a perpetual inheritance.” Although Peter could be referring to those Jews in particular, the Babylonian captivity had taken place in 603 BC, and it would be hard to see why Peter would still call them “foreigners” when they had lived outside of Palestine for centuries; “to the chosen of the Diaspora” would have been sufficient. Furthermore, he is definitely including Gentiles in I Peter 4:3.

When considering the historical setting in which I Peter was written (see above), it seems better to see Peter making a parallel between the history of God’s people in the past who were scattered by Babylon and Assyria to those who had been scattered by Rome and who were living at the time that Peter was written. Thus, the term becomes a means of conceptualizing their predicament, but includes both Jews and Gentiles. In the same way, the Diaspora Jews were in danger of losing their unique identity as the people of God, and had to avoid being swallowed up by the culture in which they were living.

In an even broader sense, Peter’s wording also becomes a reminder of the transitoriness of life and the spiritual exile all believers experience until the return of Christ. Although some see Peter’s emphasis on contrasting their earthly existence to their heavenly home (as does Heb. 11:13-16), the greater emphasis is on defining the relationship of the believer to the society in which he lives. Like the Jews in the Diaspora and those dispersed by Rome, the believer also senses the stress of being an “exile” in a strange land.

NOTE: The concept of separateness that was built into the nation of Israel also played a key role in preserving the Jewish people when they were in Babylonian captivity. Normally, when a people live in another land for any length of time, they begin to adopt the manners and customs of that people. For example, a second or third generation Japanese living in America retains little about them that “looks” Japanese. They cannot speak or write Japanese; they dress, talk and think like Americans. Had this happened to the Jews, their identity as a people of God would have been lost and God’s purposes for them terminated (Gen. 12:1-3; Exo. 19:6; Ro. 3:1-2; Heb. 7:13-14). But the dietary restrictions, among other things, preserved them as unique among the peoples of the world even though they were a dispersed people.


**Chosen by God**

Both “elect” (i.e. “chosen” *eklektos* -- ἐκλεκτὸς) and “foreigners” (*parepidemois* -- παρεπιδήμοις) are adjectives in Greek that are used as substantives in apposition to each other. “Chosen” denotes the addressees’ relationship to God, while “foreigners” describes their relationship to society (Jobes, 75).

The analogy to the Jewish people continues by calling the believer “chosen of God.” The word “chosen” has a passive meaning, marking the readers out as the objects of the electing action of God. Though they were aliens with respect to society, they were not to God, for they had been chosen by Him (cf. I Pet. 2:9).

Being “chosen” or “elected” has both an historical and theological background.

**Historically,** Israel was chosen to be the people of God because God was fulfilling His promise to Abraham in them. Deuteronomy 4:37 says, “Because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them . . .”

Israel’s election makes them a unique nation, distinct from every other nation on the earth. This national election, however, does not guarantee individual salvation. That is based on God’s election of the individual for salvation. In Deuteronomy 10:15-16, those who are elected for salvation are commanded to circumcise their hearts, while the nation had outward circumcision only.

Both the OT and NT make it clear that messianic salvation would extend to the Gentiles – and so the same terminology that God used of Israel in the OT is also used of the church (composed of Jews and Gentiles) in the New – they too have become “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,” (I Pet. 2:9) - they too have been chosen. So, although the church is neither a “new” Israel, nor do we become Jews, the church shares similar designations to the nation as the people of God. This parallelism is clear throughout this epistle.

Theologically, when referring to salvation, *eklektos* (eklektos; “chosen”) refers to the biblical doctrine that before creation, God selected out from among the human race those whom He would bring to faith, justify, and glorify in and through Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28-39; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

“The doctrine of election, like every truth about God, involves mystery and sometimes stirs controversy. But in Scripture it is a pastoral doctrine, brought in to help Christians see how great is the grace that saves them, and to move them to humility, confidence, joy, praise, faithfulness, and holiness in response. It is the family secret of the children of God. We do not know who else He has chosen among those who do not yet believe, nor why it was His good pleasure to choose us in particular. What we do know is, first, that had we not been chosen for life we would not be believers now (for only the elect are brought to
Ted Kirnbauer

I Peter 1

faith). Second, that as elect believers we may rely on God to finish in us the good work that he started (1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23-24; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18). Knowledge of one’s election thus brings comfort and joy.

Peter tells us we should be “eager to make [our] calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10)—that is, certain to us. Election is known by its fruits. Paul knew the election of the Thessalonians from their faith, hope, and love, the inward and outward transformation of their lives that the gospel had brought about (1 Thess. 1:3-6). The more that the qualities to which Peter has been exhorting his readers appear in our lives (goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love: 2 Pet. 1:5-7), the surer of our own election we are entitled to be.” (Packer, Election: God Chooses His Own)

The prepositional phrases in 1:2 expand upon this “choosing”:

- We are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father (= the origin of election)
- We are chosen by the sanctifying work of the Spirit (explains how election is made operative in believers’ lives)
- We are chosen for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (=the goal of election)

Each of these expressions will be examined.

1. Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father

Some think that “foreknowledge” merely means that God knows who will believe before it comes to pass. However, “the NT understanding of God’s foreknowledge of His people indicates that God did not simply observe them or have information about them at some prior time in history. Instead, God chose them according to (κατά, kata), or consistent with, His plan and purpose long before God formed a people to be His own” (Jobes, 68). The idea is less of a passive “knowing in advance” than an active “taking note with the intent to bless.” It is God’s favorable attitude toward His people with the intent to bless them in accordance with His plan (Hiebert, 38). In I Peter 1:20 the redemptive work of Christ was also said to be foreknown before the foundation of the world. It was in God’s plan before the world was made (cf. Acts 4:27-28).

In fact, it seems better to include the idea of selection in the word “foreknow”, for elsewhere in the Bible “to know” means to know and to regard with peculiar interest, to delight in, or to direct special affection toward (cf. Gen. 18:19; Exo. 2:25; Psalm 1:6; 144:3; Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5; Matt. 7:23; I Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; II Tim. 2:29; I Jn. 3:1). In other words, when the Bible says that God foreknew who would be saved, it means that God saw fallen humanity and then fixed His mind on some whom He predestined for salvation.

“God’s divine initiative has operated in their lives even before they were aware of it. It is this purposeful plan of God, larger than the individual’s life, that forms the ultimate foundation for the hope and encouragement that Peter is about to offer . . . With the prepositional phrase,
‘chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father’ Peter reminds his readers that the God who took the initiative in their lives has drawn them into an intimate, loving, and redemptive relationship with Him, but also one in which God claims supreme authority over their lives. Such a reminder is apt at times when Christians are troubled by the circumstances in which they find themselves, confused about how they live, and tempted to doubt God’s goodness and faithfulness” (Jobes, 68-69).

2. Chosen by the sanctifying work of the Spirit

Believers have been chosen by the sanctifying work of the Spirit.

The word “sanctify” has two nuances of meaning: to be set apart from the world (cf. II Thess. 2:13), and to be morally transformed in character (cf. I Cor. 6:11). Although the two components of sanctification cannot truly be separated, the first meaning is the dominant one in this verse. That is, the Holy Spirit is the One who makes God’s foreknowledge and election operative in the lives of people. He is the One who causes us to be born again (Jn. 3:8). This then results in transformation of character.

3. Chosen for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

The consecrating work of the Holy Spirit has a specific goal. He does not bring the believer into some sort of esoteric spirituality, but into the New Covenant which was inaugurated by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 9:13-15; 10:24).

Again, Peter’s terminology has a close relationship to the experiences of Israel. The sprinkling of the people with blood at the ratification ceremony of the Mosaic covenant was well known (Exo. 24:3-8). In that ceremony, an altar was set up at the foot of Mount Sinai and young Israelite men offered bulls as fellowship offerings to God (at that time the Aaronic priesthood had not yet been instituted). Moses took half of the blood and sprinkled it on the altar, indicating that the people’s forgiveness was based on the sacrifice. After that, he took the book of the covenant and read it to the people who then pledged obedience to God and vowed, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!” (Exo. 24:7). Moses then sprinkled the other half of the blood on them making it a solemn covenant which in effect was saying, if they disobeyed, their own blood would be required of them (Carson, Commentary of the NT use of the OT, 1016).

The grammar of the phrase, “for obedience and sprinkling of the blood” is very difficult in Greek. In I Peter 1:1 the phrase begins with the word εἰς [eis], which has a telic sense, meaning “for the purpose of” or “moving toward the goal of.” That is, “We have been chosen . . . for the purpose of” obedience and sprinkling. Most commentators see this as an allusion to Exodus 24:3-8 (see above) but differ in how they relate. Carson explains that grammatically, “obedience and sprinkling” probably express a singular idea (this is known as hendiadys) referring to the establishment of a covenant. In other words, just as in the OT people pledged obedience to God and the blood of the covenant is applied to them, so under the New Covenant the believer binds himself to obedience and is sprinkled.
with blood. The resultant meaning is that we have been chosen to enter into a new Covenant relationship with God. We have entered into it pledging our obedience and by having the blood of Christ applied to seal it [Carson, Commentary of the NT use of the OT, 1016-1017; Lk. 22:20]. As Calvin says, “formerly under the law the sprinkling of blood was made by the hand of the priest; so now the Holy Spirit sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ for the expiation of our sins.” Christ’s death has perfected for all time those who are sanctified (Heb. 10:14).

As Hebrews says,

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God . . . to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven. . . . and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood . . . “ -- Hebrews 12:22-24

This idea fits well with the Diaspora motif as well (see above notes “Foreigners of the Diaspora”). Through the prophets, both before and after the exile, God promised that He would re-gather His people and reconstitute the twelve tribes (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31:8-14; Ezek. 37:21-22; Zech. 10:6-12). He also promises to sprinkle them clean and put His Spirit within them (Ezek. 36:24-28 = a reference to the New Covenant). Therefore, when Peter mentions the Diaspora followed by “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” he could very well be echoing Ezekiel’s words.

Summary

Peter’s words continue to be true to all Christians. We are in exile, too. Being in exile means that we are forced to live in a place that is not of our choosing. It means to be in a land full of beliefs and practices that are not our own. It means there will be rejection and suffering that we must face. But that is not the meaning of our existence. We are aliens and live in exile for a most wonderful reason: we have become citizens of a glorious kingdom. We have become children of the household of God. Rejection by the world, feeling like we don’t fit in, experiencing persecution and ridicule for what we believe, and facing hostility is all the result of the gracious act of God in choosing us out of the world to participate in the New Covenant community. Peter begins his letter in this way to remind his readers of the privilege they have, and to motivate them to stand firm in Christ.

John 15:19  “If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”
I Peter 1:3-9

By emphasizing the mercy of God in giving us new birth in both 1:3 and 2:10, Peter creates a literary parenthesis called *inclusio*. The verses in-between the parenthesis unpack what it means to be born again and part of the New Covenant community. These verses also prepare the readers to receive the exhortations in the rest of the book (from 2:11 ff.) that explain how to please God in an ungodly world.

I Peter 1:3-12 opens the letter and *gives the theological basis for the Christian life* and introduces the themes and motifs of the letter.

These verses can be divided as follows:

- 1:3-5 the nature the Christian’s new life in Christ
- 1:6-9 the joy and suffering in the new life
- 1:10-12 the goal of our salvation - a fulfillment of God’s plan revealed in the prophets

1:3 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,

1:5 by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1:3-5 The nature of the Christian’s new life in Christ

Knowing the awfulness of their circumstances makes Peter’s outburst of praise and joy in 1:1-3 quite shocking. How could he possibly be so optimistic and confident as he writes to Christians whose lives are in chaos? It is because he knows the God whose being and actions are worth celebrating.

In Greek, verses 3-12 form a single sentence that is made of a number of subordinate clauses that modify the main clause “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In other words, all of the things in verses 3-12 are reasons why God should be blessed.

God is revealed in relation to His beloved Son. Jesus is the center of our faith and confessing Him as Lord encapsulates our relationship to Him and the Father. As John 5:23 says, “all will honor the Son
even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.”

The first reason that God is to be blessed is because of the great mercy He exercised toward us by causing us to be born again through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

**We have been born again according to the great mercy of God**

Verse 2 had mentioned that God’s foreknowledge and our election resulted in our salvation through the sanctifying work of the spirit. Now Peter mentions God’s abundant mercy at the source of our new life.

Thanks to God, believers have a real hope – an absolute certainty for the future - in spite of their awful circumstances. All of these blessings are totally dependent on the mercy of God. HE has caused us to be born again.

“Believers are the children of God, not merely as his rational creatures, but as the subjects of a new birth. They are born of God. They are born of the Spirit. They are begotten of God. 1 John 5:1-18. The essential idea in such representations is that of communication of life. We derive one form of life from our corrupt earthly parents, and another from the Spirit. “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.” (John 3:6.) . . . All beginning of life is directly from God; and this is what the Bible most explicitly asserts to be true of regeneration. Those who become the children of God are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13)” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol 2, 701).

“It is difficult to think of a more sweeping concept than new birth. Just as people receive their ethnic identity, their citizenship, their socioeconomic class, and their innate potentialities from their biological parents, Christians have a new identity and a new citizenship that redefines their relationship with society and transforms their identity and character” (Jobes, 81).

God has taken a personal interest in every Christian, and this kindness and generosity changes everything about life, because God ties the fortunes and future of His special people, Christians, to that of Jesus Christ. Through the new birth, God has given Christians a totally new status and a completely fresh start in their standing and relationship with Him. This means that we have a completely new meaning and purpose in life as well.

**We have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**

The new birth and the benefits that flow from it are inseparably tied to, and are a direct result of the resurrection of Jesus. His future is now the future of every Christian. Jesus’ resurrection not only proves that the dead will rise; it also “has inherent in it that which makes the resurrection of the believing dead inevitable” (Fee, 748), for His resurrection is the first fruits of those who have fallen
asleep (I Cor. 15:12-28). The act of God raising Christ from the dead is a guarantee by God Himself that the believing dead will also be raised. (see my notes on I Cor. 15:20, 42-57). Philippians 3:20-21 states, “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.” Someday our Savior will come from the heavenly “state” and extend His kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10). At His coming He will transform our frail flesh (I Cor. 15:51-58; II Cor. 5:1-10) with its daily struggles with sin (see notes on Phil. 3:10) into the likeness of His glorified body – imperishable, spiritual, glorious, powerful (I Cor. 15:38-49).

The reality of our resurrected life is symbolized in the picture of baptism: “we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Ro. 6:4-5).

Our new birth, predicated on the resurrection of Christ, is called a living hope. In Classical Greek the word “hope” was an expectancy of the future for things either good or evil. In the NT it is always used of a future good (Hiebert, 48). The unbelieving world has hope, but it is a dead hope because it is based on futile things (Eph. 2:12; I Thess. 4:13). The hope generated by (or, as a result of) the new birth is living. It is “ever living because Christ, the ground for that hope, is ever living. The present reality of the Christian’s life is defined and determined by the reality of the past – the resurrection of Jesus Christ – and is guaranteed into the future because Christ lives forevermore” (Jobes, 85).

**We have been born again to obtain the inheritance - our salvation revealed in the last times**

Those who receive new birth have “a living hope.” They also receive an inheritance.

“The word inheritance originally denoted the portion that was received by lot, hence the portion that one received as his inheritance or possession. It may refer to a present possession (Gal. 3:18; Heb. 11:7), but in 1:4 clearly refers to an expected possession (Col. 3:24; Heb. 9:15)” (Hiebert, 49).

In this historical context, “the inheritance of land was a major source for increasing one’s wealth, social status, and security” (Jobes, 86). “If the Christians to whom Peter writes had in fact been expelled from Rome, their personal experience may have included a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness common to those who experience disruptive elements beyond their control. Moreover, since wealth and inheritance were most often vested in land in the first-century world, a displacement from one’s homeland meant that whatever property one stood to inherit would be of uncertain benefit, if any. Thus, the loss of inheritance and family rights could lead directly to feelings of hopelessness. But even if the Christians to whom Peter writes have not been physically displaced, their new life as Christians affected their social status. It may have even jeopardized their inheritance as members of pagan families. . . Such experiences may understandably result in feelings of hopelessness” (Jobes, 85).
Peter, however, points out that though these believers may have lost all that they had possessed in this world, they are heirs of something infinitely better. They have become members of God’s family, and hold an inheritance that cannot be taken from them through time or circumstance.

Each of the adjectives used in verse 4 describes the permanent nature of the inheritance that each member of God’s family receives:

- “Imperishable” refers to freedom from death or decay. It shares in the nature of God Himself (Ro. 1:23; I Tim. 1:17) and is characteristic of our resurrected state (I Cor. 15:52).

- “Undefiled” is a word whose root means “to color something by painting or staining it.” It means that it is unsusceptible to any stain and speaks of freedom from uncleanness or impurity. It is used of the character of Christ (Heb. 7:26) and the stain of the world’s influence (Ja. 1:27).

- “Unfading” denotes freedom from the ravages of time. Our inheritance has a permanent beauty. Furthermore, it is reserved in heaven.

As Beare puts it, “the inheritance is untouched by death, unstained by evil, unimpaired by time; it is compounded of immortality, purity, and beauty.” MacDonald says the same thing in a simplified way: it is “death-proof,” “sin-proof,” and “time-proof.”

In a similar way, our Lord in Matthew 6:19-21 said, “... store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal...”

If this isn’t enough, Peter adds that it is “reserved in heaven for you” – words that translate a perfect, passive participle in Greek. The perfect tense indicates that the inheritance was put in a place of safekeeping and remains there even now. The passive voice indicates that God is the one who reserves it for us, and the addition of the words “for you” stress the personal application of the blessing.

The concept of believers having an inheritance is found throughout Paul’s letters as well (Gal. 3:18, 29; 4:1, 7, 30; 5:21; I Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Ro. 4:13-14; 8:17). In Ephesians 1:13-14, Paul stresses the security of our inheritance when he says, “having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” The Holy Spirit Himself is a seal that marks believers out until the day of redemption (cf. Eph. 4:30) and is also the guarantee or pledge (deposit) of our inheritance. Just as a down payment is a first installment and a guarantee that the full payment is coming (Gen. 38:17-18 of items Judah gave to Tamar), so the Holy Spirit is an installment and guarantee that our salvation (i.e. our inheritance) will be complete at the end of the age.

The NASB translation “with a view to the redemption of God's own possession” in Ephesians 1:14 is very difficult to understand. It means “until the purchased possession is redeemed” (I Pet. 2:9;
Exo 19:5; Acts 20:28; Ps. 74:2 – Bruce, 267). In other words, Paul says that God has redeemed us for His possession and has given us the Holy Spirit now as a down payment that we will be purchased in full (redeemed). If God makes a down payment, we have absolute assurance that we will become God's possession, His inheritance, in a total sense. Peter refers to this completed salvation as “a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

It is also interesting to see that though we will RECEIVE an inheritance from God, Ephesians 1:11-12 says that we ARE an inheritance as well.

“In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

“We have obtained an inheritance” is the verb form of the word “inheritance” in I Peter 1:4 but literally means “we have been appointed (or chosen) by lot.” In other Greek literature, it can simply mean, “to be destined, or chosen” (NIV). In the OT it was used of dividing the Promised Land by lot (LXX Num. 26:55-56). Israel is called God’s “lot” or “portion” (Deut. 9:29 – most translations use “inheritance”). The believer’s appointment by lot is based on the sovereignty of God (we are predestined), that is, God has appointed us by lot to be His (Lincoln, 36). It is our destiny to be assigned as God’s portion, as His inheritance.

Furthermore, in Ephesians 1:11 it tells us that being chosen by God is linked to the purpose of His plan in accordance with His will. God is carrying out His will, and part of His will is that we become His. The reason why follows in Ephesians 1:12. Namely, we have been made His allotment for the praise of His glory. In Ephesians 1:5 and 6 it says that we were predestined to be brought in a relationship to Him to the praise of the glory of His grace (God’s grace is glorified by choosing sinners for the blessings of salvation), and in verses 11 and 12 we have become His allotment to the praise of His glory. In the end, God’s working in the church results in His own glorification. The idea of God working for His own name’s sake or for His glory is an integral part of OT thinking (Deut. 32:9-9; Isa. 43:7, 21; 48:9-11; Jer. 13:11, etc.). The praise of God’s glory is not just an act of worship; it is the glory of the church’s entire existence.

So, we ARE God’s inheritance (chosen to be His) and we will RECEIVE an inheritance.

Concretely, what is the inheritance that we receive that Peter is referring to in verse 4?

I Peter 1:5 tells us: we are protected by the power of God for salvation. In other words, the summary term of our inheritance is salvation. Our inheritance means that we are guaranteed a relationship and acceptance with God and are welcomed into His presence.

In verse 4 Peter spoke of our inheritance being kept safe; in verse 5 he speaks of the heirs being safe. WE “are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the
last time” (1:5). “To protect” is a military term meaning to guard something. The present tense verb indicates that the protection is continual and it is nothing less than the power of God that guards us.

It is our present possession of Christ which makes our future secure. Notice that we ARE protected NOW for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last days (at the return of Christ). The fact that our salvation is “ready to be revealed” indicates that everything necessary for the full experience of our salvation has already been accomplished and is in our possession. The passive verb “to be revealed” also implies that the salvation is presently in existence. It CAN be revealed at any time; it is just that God has not yet unveiled it in all its glory. He is waiting for “the last days” when Christ returns.

Summary

We find two ideas of inheritance in the Bible. First, we will become God’s inheritance. That is, we are His possession in an absolute sense, but our salvation is also our inheritance as well.

God’s interest in us and His kindness and generosity toward us changes everything. God no longer sees us as His enemies, but as people related to His Son who will share in His future. We have an inheritance reserved in heaven for us and we are protected by the power of God until we receive it in full.

Peter presents biblical salvation in a way that is different from the popular belief that Christians die, go up to heaven and receive their full and final reward. According to the Bible, our salvation is not complete until God’s plan for the world is complete, Christ rules over the earth (Col. 3:4), and the believer receives his resurrected body.

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come” (Eph. 1:18-21).
1:6-9 the joy and suffering in the new life

1:6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,
1:7 so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
1:8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,
1:9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

Just as the word “mercy” in 1:3 and 2:10 forms a literary parenthesis, so verses 6 and 8 are bracketed by the word “rejoice.” This can be outlined as follows:

**In this** ("In this" = “In receiving the great mercy of God spoken of in verses 3-5”)

You greatly rejoice,

**even** though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials,

so that the proof of your faith, . . . may be found . . .

**and**

though you have not seen Him, you love Him,

and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him,

you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

The blessing of being recipients of God’s great mercy (1:1-5) brings great joy (1:6a – “In this you greatly rejoice”); at the same time, it brings believers into conflict with society whose values and priorities are different than their own. This results in trials, suffering, and persecution (1:6b - “even though now . . . you have been distressed by various trials”).

“Various” describes the diversity of forms that trials take. The original meaning of “various” was “many colored” or “variegated.” It was used of the veining in marble or of colorful stones. It described the skin of a leopard, or fabric that was woven with many colors in it (cf. Gen. 37:3 LXX for Joseph’s many colored tunic). In Matthew 4:24 “various” refers to the many different types of afflictions that people had when they came to Jesus. There it says “. . . they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.” Trials come in all shapes and sizes; they have many aspects and may change their appearance from day to day. But the word “various” can also be applied to the grace (I Pet. 4:10) or wisdom of God as well (Eph. 3:10). For every varied trial there is an equally varied, yet ample provision from God. “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4:16).
Even though outwardly no two trials look alike, they are all of the same species (they are trials) and they all have a purpose in the design of God. James focuses on the purpose of trials in relationship to our own development when he says that “the testing of your faith produces endurance, and let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (Ja. 1:3-4). Peter focuses on the relationship of our trials to God. He says that believers are distressed by various trials “so that” the proof of their faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pet 1:7). Later, he gives examples of how God receives glory through a Christian’s behavior (2:9, 12 and 4:11). In other words, James emphasizes that trials are the means of testing the depth and reality of our faith and the instrument that perfects it. Peter also emphasizes that trials test our faith, but are a means of glorifying God.

Knowing the purpose of trials is what allows us to view them as reasons to rejoice instead of as reasons to despair. Trials strip away all false conceptions and self-imposed delusions and allow us to see our true spiritual condition. (How can God really love me when He allows my life to be so miserable and such evil to befall me? Can I depend upon God when life seems to be beyond His control? Will I find in Him a place to rest when circumstances drag me down? Will God prove to be all that He has said that He is?) One question answered by testing is whether or not faith will persevere (Burdick, 168). Trials are also the vehicle by which we can glorify God; a proper attitude in the midst of suffering proves to ourselves and others the reality of the genuine hope that we have in the unseen promises of God – this then results in glory to God.

In verse 7 the nature of our faith is expanded upon by comparing our lives to the refining of gold. Gold, when tested by fire, has the impurities burned out of it. So does faith. However, faith is much more valuable than gold: gold will perish, faith will lead to the fullness of our salvation.

The depth of our faith is also seen in the hope that we have in Christ. Though we have not seen the resurrected Christ, the reality of His resurrection has given us great hope and joy even now. Contrast this to Thomas who doubted the resurrection of Christ. Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (Jn 20:29). The faith that “does not see, yet believes” is the type of faith that is evidenced by “joy inexpressible” (verse 8) and obtains in the end “the salvation of our souls.”

Summary

God’s word speaks of a certain future and a real hope in the midst of reality of life. It is based on the resurrection of Christ. It flows from the mercy of God. It is protected by His infinite power. There will be suffering and hard times, but that too is under God’s control and will confirm the reality of our trust in Jesus as well as develop our confidence in his keeping power. But more than that, it will make us worshippers of the living God as we remember His great mercy. We will glorify Him as we respond to trials with faith and confidence in His word.
Though the believer experiences many trials in this life he need not be discouraged, for the hope of eternity in the midst of trials results in praise, glory, and honor to God. In the face of trials, believers learn to trust God as King, Lord and as the One who has guaranteed never to abandon or forsake them.

Paul said, “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (Ro. 8:16-18). It is by being reborn and reflecting upon the mercy of God and looking forward to our promised inheritance that we are empowered to be content and even joyful in the most tumultuous days of life on this earth.

**I Peter 1:10-12**

I Peter 1:3-12 was written to provide us with the foundation necessary to overcome trials as well as prepare us for the exhortations about godly living in 1:13 and following. In verses 3-9 Peter has reminded us that because we love Christ and have been blessed with a wonderful salvation, we can rejoice with “joy inexpressible” (1:8) even in the midst of suffering (cf. Ro. 8:18). Now in verses 10-12 he emphasizes the privilege we have of being the beneficiaries of a salvation that was a mystery to both the prophets of old and the angels in heaven.

**The mystery of salvation that has been revealed to us**

Ephesians 1:7-10

> “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.”

Ephesians 1:9 talks about the mystery of God’s will. This mystery is explained in verse 10 as God’s plan to unite all things in Christ. This plan is taking place throughout the periods of human history (literally “the fullness of the times”) and includes all of creation - things in heaven and things on earth. You and I are part of this plan as well. In verse 11 it tells us that we have been predestined according to God’s purpose as He works all things out according to His will. The end result is the praise of His glory (v. 12).

To state it concisely, the mystery of God’s will is that He is directing history so that the universe, which is now fragmented by sin, will become a coherent totality in Christ (Lincoln, 33; Bruce, 261).
In theology, this plan is referred to as a decree of God. Charles Hodge defines a decree like this:

“‘The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.’ Agreeably to this statement: (1.) The end or final cause contemplated in all God’s decrees, is his own glory. (2.) They are all reducible to one eternal purpose. (3.) They are free and sovereign, determined by the counsel of his own will. (4.) They comprehend all events.”

He expands upon this by saying:

“The decrees of God are eternal. He sees the end from the beginning; the distinctions of time have no reference to him who inhabits eternity. The Scriptures therefore always speak of events in time as revelations of a purpose formed in eternity. The salvation of men, for example, is said to be “according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 3:11.) What is revealed in time was hidden for ages, i.e., from eternity in the mind of God. (Eph. 3:9.) Believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Eph. 1:4.) “Who has saved us, and called us . . . . according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων, before eternal ages.” (2 Tim. 1:9.) Christ as a sacrifice was “foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God.” (1 Pet. 1:20, 21; Rom. 11:33-36; Acts 2:23.) This is the constant representation of Scripture. History in all its details, even the most minute, is but the evolution of the eternal purposes of God.” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol. 1, 536-539)

As we have said, the mystery of God’s will is His plan to unite all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). What Paul wants us to see is the marvelous blessing we have by living in the age when God is making the mystery of His will known (Eph. 1:9). This has not always been the case. In Ephesians 3:5, it tells us that this mystery “in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 2:6-10 also says, “Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, ’Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.’ For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”

We can see the process of uniting creation in Christ in a number of ways.

First, we know that Jesus has already been crowned with universal dominion (Eph. 1:20-22; Matt 28:18; Heb. 1:13; Phil 2:9-10; Heb. 1:2; I Pet. 3:22; I Cor. 15:27). Jesus Himself said “all authority has been given to Me” (Matt. 28:19). Paul says that Christ is now head of all things (Eph. 1:22) and fills all
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I Peter 1

(Eph. 1:23; 4:10). He is Lord of heaven and earth (Phil. 2:9-11). His exalted position enables all things in the cosmos to be united in Him (Eph. 1:19-21).

In addition, we see that God is reconciling all people, both Jew and Gentile, to Himself. In Ephesians 3:1-6, the mystery is specifically said to be “that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ.”

Furthermore, through Jesus’ death and resurrection the enemies of God have been conquered. Satan has been stripped of his authority. Colossians 2:15 says that at the cross, Jesus “disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him.” Death has been conquered as well (I Cor. 15:25-27). 1 Corinthians 15:54 tells us that through the resurrection of Christ, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory” (Also see Hebrews 2:14-15). The power of sin has also been broken. Romans says, “that our old self was crucified with Him . . . so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin” (Ro. 6:6-7). Just as the sufferings of Jesus were followed by glory, so those who suffer with Jesus now will find glory when He returns.

God’s redemptive plan can also be found in the OT, but it was not understood until the Holy Spirit revealed it to us through the apostles (Eph. 2:20; 3:5). Therefore, in verses 10-12 Peter stresses the honor bestowed upon us in being the recipients of this wonderful salvation. He does this by comparing our experience to that of the OT prophets and angels.

1:10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries,
1:11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow.

The OT prophets wrote about the salvation we now enjoy long before it all came to pass in history. As early as Genesis 3:15, there is the hint of the suffering of Christ and His victory over Satan. Then in Genesis 12, in the Covenant that God made with Abraham, God said “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” – also a subtle indication of the salvation that would be revealed. Isaiah 53 clearly predicted the sufferings of Christ, and passages like Isaiah 9:6 or Psalm 2 spoke about the glories that followed. Nevertheless, the people in past generations did not experience this salvation personally, nor did they, or the prophets who wrote about it, fully comprehend what was written (Ro. 1:2; 3:21; 15:8-12; Gal. 3:8).

1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

When the Spirit of Christ revealed to the prophets what would take place, they sought to know who He was referring to, and when and how these things would come to pass (compare Dan. 9:2; 12:6-13; Hab. 2:1-4). Though these prophesies provided hope to the people of God, it was revealed that the
prophecies were not for them. The prophets were mere servants passing along promises that were intended for us!

According to verse 12 it wasn’t just the prophets who inquired about God’s purposes; the angels also longed to understand them.

Angels have watched the drama of man’s salvation since the beginning of creation. They sang for joy when God created the universe (Job 38:7). They watched as man, who was created to have dominion over the earth, fell into sin and ended his “rule” almost immediately. The angels heard the cryptic warning spoken to Satan in Genesis 3:15 stating, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Years later, they heard God’s promises to Abraham that he would become a great nation and that in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12:3). But as they watched history unfold, the promises seemed to fall short of what was expected as Abraham died as a stranger in the land promised to be his (Heb. 11:9) with a single heir.

The angels watched as Messiah was born as a helpless babe in a manger and announced His birth to shepherds. They warned Jesus’ parents of the threat of Herod who wanted to take the child’s life (Matt. 2:13). They ministered to Jesus after His temptation (Matt. 4:11), and were ready to defend Him at His betrayal (Matt. 26:53). It is hard to imagine what went through their minds as Jesus, the promised Savior, called out to the Father on the cross, “MY God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

They must have stood amazed at the wisdom of God, His grace, mercy, and love when life came from death, and Jesus in one great act conquered Satan, death, and sin.

With the apostle Paul, the angels must have declared, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became his counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36). And now, even before the events of Revelation 5 transpire, they must sing “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing . . . To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." (Rev. 5:12-13).

By reminding us of what the prophets and angels yearned to see, but didn’t, Peter draws a continuity between what was foretold in the OT and the gospel that was preached. The message preached wasn’t a new religion, but the revealing of a mystery hidden for centuries by the will of God. Through these verses he causes us to be amazed at the privilege we have in being recipients, not just observers, of such a great salvation.

As Jesus said, "blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it,
and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it” (Matt. 13:16-17). Of all the times to be alive, it is a supreme honor to be born when we have!

Notice a few additional points:

1. Christ Himself (“the Spirit of Christ”) predicted His death and resurrection hundreds of years before it happened (cf. Ro. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; Gal. 4:6; Acts 16:7 for similar expressions).

Piper makes an interesting observation. He says, “the Son of God in Heaven, has been contemplating his suffering and his death for us for centuries. Indeed as far back as the plan of salvation reaches in the mind of God, so far back has Christ been willing and ready to give himself for our sins. . . You have been loved for endless ages in the eternal plan of the Father and the Son to save sinners who trust in him.”

2. This great salvation, predicted by the prophets of old, was FOR US!

Again, Piper makes the point well: “If angels love to look at the work of God in saving sinners like us, how much more should we who are the very beneficiaries of that salvation love to look into it and be thankful for it. . .”

3. The Holy Spirit brings our salvation to us.

Finally, Peter highlights the value of our salvation by telling us in verse 12 that the Holy Spirit Himself has been sent from heaven to bring us the news of our salvation through the gospel.

“These things . . . now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven”(I Pet 1:12).

Thus the joy of knowing that we are beneficiaries of this glorious salvation that others have longed to experience becomes another reason to have strength in the midst of trials.

*I Peter 1:13-16*

“In the previous verses Peter has explained the manner in which the OT Prophets looked forward beyond their immediate horizons to the fulfillment of their words (1:10-12). The salvation they longed for has now been disclosed in the coming of Christ – a salvation that Peter’s readers are now enjoying, even as they await its consummation (1:3-9). In light of this, the readers must set their hope, their expectation, fully on the end, ‘on the grace given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.’ As obedient children – that is, obedient to Jesus Christ and the stipulations of the New Covenant – they are no longer to conform to their evil desires that dominated them before their conversion (1:14). Rather (alla) “Just
as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do (1:15 MIV). ‘Wherefore [dio] it is written, ’Be holy for I am holy’ . . . ’ (Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, 1017)

Consistent with the pattern found elsewhere in the NT, Peter follows his discussion about the nature of the new life with exhortations on how to live. As Hiebert says, “The comprehensive picture of salvation in 1:3-12 functions as a foundation for Peter’s exhortations to live out that salvation in the Christian life” (Hiebert, 75).

The first cycle of exhortations is found in 1:13-2:3. There are only four main actions in these verses:
1) fix your hope completely on the grace ahead (1:13)
2) be holy in all your behavior (1:15)
3) fervently love one another from the heart (1:22)
4) long for the word of God (2:2)

Each of these commands stress what kind of life should result from genuine salvation.

These verses could be divided into three subsections:
1. The Christian life in relation to God (1:13-21)
2. The Christian life in relation to other believers (1:22-25)
3. The Christian life in relation to growing in salvation (2:1-3)

**FIX YOUR HOPE ON GRACE (1:13)**

1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The “therefore” in verse 13 is best understood as introducing the conclusion to verses 3-12. However, it also makes a transition from the transforming experience of our salvation and our hope for future glory (1:3-12) to the application of that experience in our daily behavior.

Although verse 13 reads as if there are three commands ([1]“prepare your minds,” [2] “keep sober in spirit,” and [3] “fix your hope”), the main idea is “fix your hope.” The other two “commands” are actually subordinate participles that tell us how we can keep our hope fixed on the grace of God. The ESV brings this out by translating verse 13 as “preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace . . . “

“Preparing your minds for action” literally reads “having girded up the loins of your mind.”

“Girding up your loins” was a common metaphor in the OT (Exo. 12:11; I Ki. 18:46; II Ki. 9:1; Jer. 1:17; Lk. 12:35; Eph. 6:14; etc.). “Loins” are the seat of the strength of the body. Today we call this our “core.” Girding the loins creates the image of a person wearing flowing garments and tucking them into his belt so that he can run and move about freely and quickly without his clothing impeding him. In Exodus God had told His people that they were going to leave Egypt. As they were preparing to leave and eating the
Passover, He said to them in Exodus 12:11, "Now you shall eat it in this manner with your loins girded and your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste." In other words, they were to be prepared to move at any moment. That's the idea here as well, but Peter is talking about freeing the mind to move, not the body.

The mind (rather than the heart or soul) stresses our rational, intellectual, and reflective powers, as well as our moral thinking. The mind is the spiritual battleground where our wars are fought. Many of us have lived outside of the presence of God and the knowledge of His ways for much of our lives. Consequently, we learned to live life independently of God. We learned to cope with disappointment, fear, anger, and anxiety in our own strength and by our own wisdom. In addition, we sought all of our pleasure, satisfaction, and joy from the world around us. When we became Christians we became new creatures in Christ (II Cor. 5:17), but all of these actions, reactions, coping mechanisms, pleasures, and feelings remained intact in our memories. What we have learned needs to be unlearned; the way to unlearn is through the transformation of the mind. This is why Paul in Romans 12:2 tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Transformation is a change of appearance from one thing to another (Haldane, 556; Matt. 17:2). Instead of looking like the unbelieving, the Christian is to be transformed by allowing the truth of the Word of God to change his thinking so that his life matches the new spiritual world into which he has been introduced (II Cor. 3:18). (Notice, the word “transform” is a passive verb; it says, “be transformed”). We don’t transform ourselves; rather it is God who transforms our conduct through the renewal of our minds. We are simply commanded to cooperate with this transformation process.)

Peter’s words remind us of other places in Scripture that call for similar action. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.” Taking thoughts captive means that we evaluate every thought that enters our mind in light of the truth. Those thoughts that do not come from God need to be rejected and subjected to Christ. We need to bring any loosely flowing thoughts and speculations under control. We need to free our minds from anything that could cause us to stumble. We need to gird up the loins of our mind.

This is the first way to keep our hope fixed “completely on the grace to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

“You have a journey to go, a race to run, a warfare to accomplish, and a great work to do; as the traveler, the racer, the warrior, and the laborer, gather in, and gird up, their long and loose garments, that they may be more ready, prompt, and expeditious in their business, so do you by your minds, your inner man, and affections seated there: gird them, gather them in, let them not hang loose and neglected about you; restrain their extravagances, and let the loins or strength and vigor of your minds be exerted in your duty; disengage yourselves from all that would hinder you, and go on resolutely in your obedience.” (Matthew Henry)
In addition to girding our minds, we need to keep sober in spirit to be able to fix our hope in grace.

Literally “being sober” would mean not being under the influence of alcohol. As a metaphor it refers to not being under the control of anything that would cause us to make poor decisions. It means we see clearly, and not allow our minds to become numb with intoxicating influences. It is avoiding any mental or spiritual intoxication that would confuse the realities of what our life in Christ really is. Jobes defines this as “restraint and moderation which avoids excess in passion, rashness, or confusion” (Jobes, 111). It implies alertness, not being under the world’s influence, and evaluating things correctly.

Now we arrive at the main command: “fix your hope completely on grace.” The grace mentioned is said to be grace that is brought to us (or, more literally, is continually being brought to us). The verb is passive. God is the source of grace; He is the One who actively carries grace to us. The grace is specifically identified as that grace that comes at the revelation of Jesus Christ – that is His second coming.

Grace is the bedrock of the Christian experience from beginning to end.

Our salvation begins with grace. Romans 3:24 says we are justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Ephesians tells us that we are saved by grace through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

We are sanctified by grace; “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law but under grace.” (Ro. 6:14). Notice carefully that this verse says that the reason sin will not have dominion over us is because we are not under the Law. If we were under the Law, sin would have dominion over us! And if sin has dominion over us we are not being sanctified. Being under grace gives us freedom from the bondage of sin which results in sanctification. Galatians 3:2b-3 also denies that sanctification comes through the Law; “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?” The believers of Galatia had begun their Christian life by faith not by keeping the Law. Why now would they be deceived into thinking that what had begun in the Spirit apart from the Law could be perfected by the flesh under the Law? This is the force of the whole argument in Galatians. The believers in the church were not trying to be saved by the Law, but trying to please God and grow in holiness by seeking to live under the Law. Paul calls this accursed (Gal. 1:8-9; 5:12).

We also persevere in our salvation by grace. Romans 8:3-4 states, “For what the Law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Christ came as a sacrifice for sin and it was His work on the cross that fulfilled the Law and condemned sin.
Lastly, Peter tells us that there is future grace awaiting us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Put your hope in that grace – the same grace that saved you, sanctifies you, and preserves you. God is blessed because He has given us a new birth and a new identity, as well as a living hope and eternal inheritance (1:3-12). “Because this hope is living, the lives of the readers should manifest a confident expectation that they will receive grace, not wrath, when Jesus Christ is revealed” (Jobes, 110). By freeing our minds from hindrances and being sober in our thinking, we can fix our hope completely on this grace. and we are encouraged to put our hope fully in this, instead of all the things that the world wants us to put our hope in (such as success, money, medical advancements, riches, technology, education, etc.).

The grace Peter is orienting us to is grace that is fully present, but not fully realized until the “revelation of Jesus Christ.” As Bennett says, “The ‘revelation’ casts its shadow before it.” The grace we have now results in our present enjoyment of it. But we also look forward to the future grace at the completion of our salvation. The anticipation of future grace is called “hope.” In a Biblical sense, hope is the assurance that the thing hoped for will surely come to pass. Our assurance of our future salvation is based on what has happened in the past, the resurrection of Christ.

If God has been faithful in the past, He will be faithful in the present and in the future. And we are to live in the light of that future. What He promised He will do. Paul also makes this point in Romans 8:32 when he says, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?” If God has already sacrificed for us what He has loved most, He will surely not hold anything back.

Christianity is not first an ethic. It is not first a faith or a feeling or a theology. Christianity is, first, God graciously, freely acting to save his people; and, second, man hoping fully in that grace. That's the essence of Christianity. God isn't commanding us to place our hope in how well we can perform, for “If it by grace it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace” (Ro. 11:36).

**BE HOLY IN ALL YOUR BEHAVIOR (1:15)**

Verse 15 states the second imperative in this section: be holy in all your behavior. Those who fix their hope in the grace to come must also conform their lives to that of their Savior.

1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Although “obedient children” makes a smooth translation into English, it changes the picture of what is being said. Literally, this verse says we are “children of obedience.” The difference in the wording is this: “Obedient children” would refer to the children’s conduct. Being “children of obedience” is the result of our new birth in 1:3 and designates our new character. It's not so much that obedience is
an adjective to modify children, as that obedience is the mother of the children. If we are born of obedience (cf. notes on I Pet. 1:2), we derive our character and our nature from obedience. Obedience is the parent whose image we bear. Prior to regeneration we were called children of wrath (Eph. 2:3) or sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:2; 5:6,) because at that time we bore the character of a different parent – disobedience. What was true of us then should no longer be true of us now.

Verse 16 gives the justification for the call to holiness. Because we have been born again and now bear the image of a different parent, we should also be holy for He is Holy.

The way to become holy is described in verse 14: “do not be conformed to the former lusts.”

Holiness requires a change from the way we lived before. Since we possess a new nature, we must not conform ourselves to the pattern or the mold of the world any longer. That pattern is described as “former lusts which were ours in our ignorance.” The word “lust” is not just sexual desire as it is most commonly used today; the term by itself is neutral in meaning and can simply refer to a strong desire, either good or bad. Here it is the desire associated with our former way of life before we were born again. These desires are “former lusts” that sprung from the ignorance we had as unbelievers (cf. Acts 17:30; Ro. 1:18-32; Eph. 4:17-20).

The standard of our holiness is God. God is holy in His nature and behavior and He is the one who called us to salvation (cf. I Pet 1:2-3). He has given us a new nature as His child. The command is for us to take action in pursuing behavior consistent with our nature.

Jobes points out several contrasts in verse 14-19 between our former and current states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMERLY</th>
<th>NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignorance of God</td>
<td>Knowledge of God and Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not God’s children/people</td>
<td>God’s children/people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled by desires</td>
<td>Controlled by obedience to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Futile way of life</td>
<td>Holy way of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmed by society</td>
<td>Misunderstood and maligned by society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A final note: The statement “be holy for I am holy” occurs with slight variations in four places in Leviticus (cf. Lev. 11:24; 19:2; 20:7-8; 20:26). Of the four, Peter quotes Leviticus 19:2 exactly. Leviticus 19:2 falls in a section that is often referred to as “the holiness code” where Moses gives instructions to the entire nation of Israel. Within this section are instructions ranging from unclean foods to skin diseases. But Peter is not instructing Christians to live under the OT law; instead he pulls the principle out from within it. Christians are to live in a way that differentiates them from the culture around them.

Peter’s application of the OT is interesting in that it preserves the authority of God’s word as something that is binding on Christians, but does not apply the specifics of the OT law.
“It is written” is a perfect tense verb in Greek. It means it was written and remains written. This declares the permanence of the word of God. In other words, Peter’s call to holiness has been and still is a part of God’s will for His people. We are to conform our character to God’s. We are to be holy as He is, in the same way that the OT believers imitated God and set themselves apart from the ways of the world.

“The apostle recognizes continuity of authority and principle between the OT and Christians, but also differences in the particulars, because his readers live after the resurrection of Jesus Christ and after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, as well as in a different time and place than ancient Israel. Christians are no less God’s people than was ancient Israel, and no less accountable to God than Israel was, but their holiness is expressed in ways that are appropriate to their own historical moment” (Jobes, 114-115).

1 Peter 1:14-16

1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 1:15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 1:16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."

Salvation is about that which is common being made holy by the hands of God. It is about sinners becoming saints, and about children of wrath becoming children of God. “The theological term for this change is sanctification. The mandate given by God to every one of His children is, ‘Be holy, because I am holy’ (1 Pet. 1:16). We are forgiven but we have not yet been perfected. There is no work in the church more important than sanctification. Paul says, ‘we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me’” (Col. 1:28, 29) (Anderson, Saucy; God's Power at Work in You).

“Holiness” is a broad concept. In the most restricted sense it is a synonym for God. The Psalmist declared, “He is Holy” (Ps. 99:3) and “Holy and awesome is His name” (Ps. 111:9). The “name” of God is much more than a tag that identifies or distinguishes God from others. In the Bible, names were descriptive of the person’s nature or position. “Holiness” when applied to God reflects all He is and does.

The root meaning of the word “holy” (or sanctify) is not certain though many have suggested it comes from the idea of “to cut” or “to divide” and carries the idea of “separate.” What is clear from the word’s use is that it refers to the realm of the sacred, as distinct from all other things.

“Although the word “holy” carries a strong moral connotation, that is not its primary significance. . . . To speak of God’s holiness is first of all to speak of His distinctiveness or His separateness from all other things. He is holy in His transcendence over all creation. "He is exalted over all the nations," the psalmist declares, and therefore, "He is holy" (Psalm 99:2, 3; see also verses 5, 9). He is "the high and lofty One . . . whose name is holy," and who lives in "a high and holy place" (Isaiah 57:15; see also 6:1).” . . .
"The fearful nature of God’s holiness is seen in Isaiah’s vision of the heavenly beings around God’s throne, calling to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). The threefold repetition of the word "holy" is the strongest way to express the superlative in the Hebrew language (see also the same threefold ascription of holiness to God in Rev. 4:8). Isaiah had partially seen the One who is holy beyond all other gods, the truly other One who is distinct from all else." (Anderson, Saucy, *God’s Power at Work in You*).

Because God is holy, everything associated with Him is also holy or sanctified.

The city of Jerusalem is called the holy city (Neh. 11:1). The priests’ clothing and the shovel used for the ashes of the altar were also called holy. The first use of "holy" in the Bible occurs when Moses meets God at the burning bush. Moses is warned, "Do not come any closer...Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground" (Exo. 3:5). Even dirt is holy if it is associated with God!

If cities, clothing, shovels, or dirt, are holy because of their connection with God, then it’s natural to assume that holiness must characterize God’s people and their behavior. The second time in the Bible "holy" is used it refers to God’s people, the "holy assembly" (Exo. 12:16). God said, "You will be to Me . . . a holy nation" (Exo. 19:6), “I have set you apart from the nations to be My own" (Lev. 20:26). Though not every individual within Israel was a believer, the nation as a whole was set apart from all other nations because the Holy One of Israel called them His people.

Of course, holiness is also tied to behavior and moral purity. God who transcends all creation is also separate from all the evil and moral pollution which defiles the creation. His "eyes are too pure to look on evil" (Hab. 1:13) and only the person who has "clean hands and a pure heart" can stand in His presence (Psa. 24:3, 4; see also Lev. 16:30). God often reminded His people that they were to be holy in their behavior because of their relationship with Him: "Be holy for I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2; see also 11:44; 20:7, 20:26; 1 Peter 1:16). Much of the law was given to instruct Israel in holiness, and deal with the times they failed to be holy.

The principle of holiness that is found in the OT remains true for the New Testament believer. Though Christians are not under the OT law, Peter refers to what was written in Leviticus 19:2 as the reason for us to live holy lives (I Pet. 1:14-16). As stated earlier, “Christians are no less God’s people than was ancient Israel, and no less accountable to God than Israel was, but their holiness is expressed in ways that are appropriate to their own historical moment” (Jobes, 114-115). The apostle Paul told us, "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1; see also I Thess. 5:23).

The process whereby the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct, and conformed more and more to the will of God and the image of Christ is called sanctification.
Sanctification has a beginning.

The process of sanctification begins when we are saved. It is part of becoming a Christian. Just as we were regenerated and justified when we believed, so we were sanctified. Titus 3:5 says, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.” In this verse Paul looks at our salvation as a single event in the past (He saved us) but calls it a “washing of regeneration.” Regeneration is a cleansing from sin. That is sanctification. It includes newness of life; “if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17). It breaks the bonds of sin; I John 3:9 says, “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.” When we are born again we have a change in conduct and become people who want to follow God. Though we sin on occasion due to the weakness of the flesh, we cannot keep on sinning as we had done before. We have been born of obedience (see last week’s notes on “obedient children” – I Peter 1:14).

“When we hear or read about sanctification, usually it’s connected with the present tense—our present Christian growth. But in Scripture, the words "sanctification," "sanctify," "saints," and "holy" are most often used in the past tense. For example, in his opening address to the Corinthian believers, Paul speaks of them as "those sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 1:2). Describing the change that took place at salvation, Paul says, "You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). . .

Our positional holiness as believers is solely because we are a new creation in Christ. Believing faith joins us to Christ so that we now share in all that Christ is, including His holiness. As Paul says, "By His [God's] doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

Our holiness in relation to Christ is illustrated by the high priest in the Old Testament, who was a type of Christ's perfect priesthood to come. The Old Testament priest represented the people before God. On his forehead he wore a plate on which was inscribed "Holy to the Lord" (Exodus 28:36). These words proclaimed that he and the people whom he represented—as well as all of the services that he performed on behalf of the people—were completely holy to the Lord. Similarly, Christ represents His people before God. As one who is totally "holy" (Mark 1:24; Acts 4:27; Revelation 3:7), He represents His people, who are now holy in Him.

When the Old Testament priest came into God's presence representing a people who had sinned, a sacrifice had to be offered. It was only on the basis of atonement to the people's sin that the priest could come before a holy God. So also with Christ, He did not need to make a sacrifice for Himself, but He did in order to bring us into God's holy presence. The writer to the Hebrews emphasizes that our sanctification or relationship to God is based on the perfect sacrifice of Christ for our sins: "... We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all....by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.... Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood" (Hebrews 10:10, 14; 13:12).
Past-tense sanctification, then, means that we as believers have been brought by God into the sphere of His holiness or purity. We have been brought into fellowship with a holy God. Scripture says that only those who are clean and holy can enter His presence to worship and fellowship with Him, and as sinners, we could not enter His holy presence. But by faith in Christ, who sacrificed Himself to cleanse us of our sins, we are joined to Him and have been invited into the very "holy of holies" of heaven to have fellowship with God. Christ's sacrifice for our sins means that God no longer holds the uncleanness of our sins against us. He now welcomes us into His holy presence because we are clothed in Christ's holiness.” (Anderson, Saucy, God's Power at Work in You).

Sanctification results in a definite break from the power and love of sin.

There is no passage that more clearly teaches about the decisive break from the power of sin than Romans 6:1-7:6.

Paul says that we have died to sin (Ro. 6:2). Murray describes what Paul means:

“He is using the language of that phenomenon with which all are familiar, the event of death. When a person dies he is no longer active in the sphere or realm or relation to which he had died. His connection with that realm has been dissolved; he has no further communications with those who still live in that realm, nor do they have with him. He is no longer en rapport with life here; it is no longer the sphere of life and activity for him. The Scripture brings this fact of experience to our attention. ‘I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found’ (Psa. 37:35, 36). ‘As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.’ (Ps 103:15-16).

In accord with this analogy, the person who lives in sin or to sin, lives and acts in the realm of sin – it is the sphere of life and activity. And the person who died to sin no longer lives in that sphere. His tie with it has been broken, and he has been translated into another realm. In the most significant sense those who still live in the realm of sin can say: ‘I sought him but he could not be found.’ This is the decisive cleavage that the apostle has in view; it is the foundation upon which rests his whole conception of the believer’s life, and it is a cleavage, a breach, a translation as really and decisively true in the sphere of moral and religious relationship as in the ordinary experience of death. There is a once-for-all definitive and irreversible breach with the realm in which sin reigns and unto death.” (Murray, Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol 2, Systematic Theology, 279)

“The antitheses which the apostle institutes in this passage serve to point up the decisive breach which this change involves. Death in sin means the service of sin as bondservants (vss. 6, 16, 17, 20); sin reigns in the mortal bodies (vs. 12); obedience is rendered to the lusts of sin (vs. 12); we present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin and as the bondservants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity (vss. 13. 19); we are free (footloose) in respect to righteousness (vs. 20); sin has dominion over us and we are under the law (vs. 14). Death to sin means that the old man has been crucified and the body of sin destroyed – we no longer serve sin (vs. 6); we are justified from sin (vs. 7); we are alive to God and live to Him (vss. 10,11); sin no longer reigns in our mortal body and does not lord it over us (vs. 12, 14); we
present ourselves to God and our members as instruments of righteousness to God, so that we are
servants of righteousness unto holiness (vs. 13, 19); we are under the reign of grace (vs. 14); we render
obedience from the heart due to the pattern of Christian teaching (vs. 17); the fruit is unto holiness and
the end everlasting life (vs. 22). This sustained contrast witnesses to the decisive change. There is no
possibility of toning down the antithesis; it appears all along the line of the varying aspects from which life
and action are to be viewed. . . This means that there is a decisive and definitive breach with the power
and service of sin in the case of everyone who has come under the control of the provision of grace.”
(Murray, Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol 2, Systematic Theology, 279-280)

Sanctification is a progressive work in which both God and man participates.

In regeneration (the new birth) God alone is at work. When He saves us, He implants desires
that were not there before: a desire for God, for holiness, and for glorifying His name; a desire to pray,
worship, love, serve, honor, and please God; a desire to show love and bring benefit to others. In
sanctification God works in us, causing us to act so that we fulfill these new desires. He makes us
increasingly more like Christ. Sanctification is both the work of God who sanctifies us and our activity as
we apply the resources made available to us through Christ.
As Packer says,

Regeneration was a momentary monergistic act of quickening the spiritually dead. As such, it was God's
work alone. Sanctification, however, is in one sense synergistic - it is an ongoing cooperative process in
which regenerate persons, alive to God and freed from sin’s dominion (Rom. 6:11, 14-18), are required to
exert themselves in sustained obedience. God’s method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant
activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but God-dependent effort (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10-14; Heb.
12:14). Knowing that without Christ's enabling we can do nothing, morally speaking, as we should, and
that he is ready to strengthen us for all that we have to do (Phil. 4:13), we "stay put" (remain, abide) in
Christ, asking for his help constantly - and we receive it (Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:1).” (J.I.
Packer)

Proof of the cooperative manner in which sanctification works.

There are many places in the Bible that demonstrate that God is the primary agent in our
sanctification, the cause behind this definitive breach from the power and love for sin.

- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your
   spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus
   Christ.”

- Philippians 2:13 “for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good
   pleasure.”

- Hebrews 13:20-21 “Now the God of peace . . . equip you in every good thing to do His will,
   working in us that which is pleasing in His sight . . .”
Nevertheless, there are also many verses that demonstrate that a believer is involved in the process as well.

- Romans 8:13 “if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

- Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Romans 8:13 and Colossians 3:5 are particularly striking for these two verses both appear in contexts where our once-for-all death to sin is in the forefront. The fact that there is a need to be “putting to death the deeds of the body” testifies that sinful desires do not die on their own or cease to exist because we have died with Christ. 2 Corinthians 7:1 makes the same point: “Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.” The assumption is that there is defilement of the flesh and that we are to be engaged in the cleansing process. Other verses support this as well: Philippians 2:12-13 “So then, my beloved . . . work out your salvation with fear and trembling;” Hebrews 12:14 “Pursue . . . the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord;” 1 John 3:3 “And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure;”

We must take special note of 2 Corinthians 3:18: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”

“Transform” is the same word used of Jesus’ transfiguration (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:3). The transformation process happens to us (“being transformed” – is passive), yet WE are the ones who must act and behold the glory of the Lord.

The word translated here as “ beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord” might also be translated as “reflecting in a mirror the glory of the Lord.”

Murray comments,

“Since the goal of the whole redemptive process, as it has respect to the people of God, is conformity to the image of Christ as the firstborn among many brethren, no passage of scripture defines for us the method of progressive sanctification more than 2 Corinthians 3:18. Whether the thought is that we reflect the glory of the Lord Christ, or that we behold His glory, both thoughts are implied. If we reflect his glory it
is because we behold it after the pattern of John’s declaration “we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14), and in beholding are being more and more transformed into his likeness. The eyes of the heart and mind become so fixed upon him as the effulgence of the Father’s glory and the express image of His being (Heb. 1:3), and therefore upon him in his matchless glory, that we more and more take on the characters of his image from one degree of similitude to another, until finally we are completely transfigured. It is a law of our psychology that we become like that in which our interests and ambitions are absorbed, and that law is not suspended in this case. But the apostle here reminds us that natural factors are not the secret of this transformation; it is from the Spirit of the Lord that this transformation proceeds.” (Murray, Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol 2, Systematic Theology, 297-298)

**INTRODUCTION: THE JUDGMENT OF GOD**

The Judge

“The Scriptures abound in passages which set forth God as the moral ruler of men; which declare that He will judge the world in righteousness. The Bible represents Him as the judge of nations and of individuals; as the avenger of the poor and the persecuted. It abounds also in promises and in threatenings, and in illustrations of the righteous judgments of God.” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, III, 847)

As we read the NT we discover that the Father has given all judgment to the Son. John 5:22-23: "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him;” verse 27, “He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.” Peter, in Acts 10:34-43, says that we are commanded to testify that Christ is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. Paul, in his speech on Mars Hill, tells the Athenians that God “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). In 2 Corinthians 5:10, he says, “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” Jesus’ role as judge is also implied when He says to the wicked, “Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness” (Matt. 5:28; Luke 13:27), and in the metaphor of Him separating the sheep from the goats (Matt. 25:31 ff. ; cf. Matt 13: 30, 36-43; 47-50). Although some see the judgment seat of Christ as a judgment specifically and solely for believers (Ryrie, Basic Theology, 512), evidence for this view is unsubstantial.

The basis of judgment

The basis of judgment is said to be the “deeds done in the body” (II Cor. 5:10); that is, God judges us based on what we do in this life. Similarly, it is said that men are to be judged “according to each man’s work” (I Pet. 1:17; Psa. 62:12; Pro. 24:12; Jer. 17:10; 25:14; Matt. 16:27; Jo. 5:29; Ro. 2:5-9; Rev. 2:23; 20:12-13). Even “the secrets of the heart” are to be brought to light (Ro. 2:16). Every act is either an object stored for future wrath (Ro. 2:5) or a treasure stored in heaven (Matt. 6: 20).
"God’s judgment will not be founded on the professions, or the relations of men, or on the appearance or reputation which they sustain among their fellows, but on their real character and on their acts, however secret and covered from the sight of men those acts may have been. God will not be mocked and cannot be deceived; the character of every man will be clearly revealed (1.) In the sight of God. (2.) In the sight of the man himself. All self-deception will be banished. Every man will see himself as he appears in the sight of God. His memory will probably prove an indelible register of all his sinful acts and thoughts and feelings. His conscience will be so enlightened as to recognize the justice of the sentence which the righteous judge shall pronounce upon him. All whom Christ condemns will be self-condemned. (3.) There will be such a revelation of the character of every man to all around him, or to all who know him, as shall render the justice of the sentence of condemnation or acquittal apparent. Beyond this the representations of Scripture do not require us to go.” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, III, 849)

“When we think of the reality and the seriousness of judgment day we must be on our guard against holding that our final salvation is to be decided on the basis of merit. The New Testament makes it abundantly clear that salvation is not the reward of the good deeds that people do. It is emphasized as strongly as it could possibly be that Christ came to this world to save sinners and that he saved them by laying down his perfect life on Calvary’s cross. Salvation comes through what Christ has done and it is applied to the individual by his or her faith. It is not any merit we may have but our faith that is the channel whereby Christ’s salvation reaches us. That must be given the strongest emphasis. And that has its consequences. There is "no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). To put our trust in Christ is to pass from death to life and among other things to know that we will receive a favorable verdict on judgment day.

The believer and the nonbeliever are both accountable and judgment day is the occasion when that account is rendered. It is not then a question of whether we are saved or not. It is the issuing of a verdict on what we have done; it is the answer to the question of what believers have done with their salvation and what unbelievers have done with their unbelieving lives. All will be required to give account of themselves to God.” (Morris, Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Judgment, Day of)

**THE BELIEVER AND JUDGMENT -- I PETER 1:17**

1:17 And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth;
1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,
1:19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.
The goal of sanctification

In I Peter 1:14-16 Peter told us to be holy in all our behavior. In verses 17-19 the motivation to progress in holiness is given. Negatively, we are to abandon sinful behavior because of the knowledge that our works will be judged (1:17). Positively, we are encouraged to lead holy lives because of the gratitude we feel over the cost involved in securing our salvation (1:18-19).

Although we have been born again (I Pet. 1:3), and are able to address God as Father (1:2, 17), we must not forget that God is still an impartial judge. Sonship is not license to live as we want, nor does it mean that God overlooks our behavior. We have been chosen “by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ” (1:2; cf. Eph. 1:4). We are not simply called children, but “obedient children” (1:14), and are commanded to be holy like God (1:14). “The pagan life that God abhors will be no less abhorred if it is lived by one who professes to be a Christian” (Jobes, 116). Peter’s point is that if we have a special relationship to God as our Father by virtue of our calling, then it is even more important that we remember who He is and show the reverence that He deserves. Although the fear of judgment is a lower type of motivation for obedience, “it is the safeguard of holiness, and it prompts obedience in things in which we do not yet understand” (Biggs, 117).

It is critical to see that the impartiality of God in this context is speaking of the fact that God does not show favoritism toward believers simply because they are His children (Ro. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25). Peter’s mention of judgment “reminds his readers that it is not their persecutors who need to be feared, but God, who is not to be trifled with nor presumed upon, for His judgment is ultimate” (Davids, 71). The timeframe of this fear is “the period of our sojourning” (NAS “the time of your stay upon earth”). In 1 Peter 4:2 he calls it “the rest of the time in the flesh.”

Threat of judgment directed toward believers is not unique to Peter. In speaking to believers, Paul says in II Corinthians 5:10, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” In a similar way, Romans 14:11-12 tells us, “For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, ‘AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.’ So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God” (Other relevant passages include Matt. 7:1-2; I Cor. 4:1-5; II Tim. 4:8; Ja. 1:12).

In the most basic sense, judgment means to evaluate someone in order to discover their true nature. This either results in condemnation or approval. But since all men are sinful (Ro. 3:23), “judgment” is a word that often includes the punishment of the sinner. Hebrews 10:27 speaks of “a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.”

Believers will be saved from eternal punishment, but our judgment must nevertheless be a horrifying experience; were it not, I Peter 1:17 and references like it, would be empty threats that provide no motivation to change our behavior. When we stand before God to have our lives evaluated, we will deeply regret every act of unrighteousness, no matter how insignificant we presently perceive
them to be. In Luke 12:2-5 Jesus says, "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops. I say to you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!" In the Sermon on the Mount He warns us not to judge others “for in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you” (Matt. 7:2). He also tells us that “every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36). The writer of Hebrews tells us that God will “judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13). Jeremiah 17:10 says, "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds." Jesus said, “And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve.”

Denney says, "The books are shut now, but they will be opened then. The things we have done in the body will come back to us, whether good or bad. Every pious thought, and every thought of sin; every secret prayer, and every secret curse; every unknown deed of charity, and every hidden deed of selfishness: we see them all again; and though we have not remembered them for years, and perhaps have forgotten them altogether, we shall have to acknowledge that they are our own, and take them to ourselves” (James Denney).

Based on our works, all men will be found guilty and worthy of condemnation. However, the believers’ hope is not in his own works, but in the merit of Christ given to us by grace. The names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9) have their names written in “the book of life.” When that book is reviewed, it will be declared that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Ro. 8:1).

In 1 Corinthians 3:15 Paul says, “If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.” This makes it clear that judgment does not include a loss of salvation for Paul specifically says, “he will be saved;” but the imagery is similar to Amos 4:11 where Amos speaks of Israel in terms of a firebrand snatched from a blaze. That is, the person will be pulled out of the fire just in the nick of time. “It will be as one who dashes through the flames, safe, but with the smell of fire on him” (Barrett, 89). Peter refers to this as the “grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 1:13).
IF WE ARE SAVED IN THE END, THEN WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF STANDING BEFORE GOD AS JUDGE?

Judgment and mercy glorify God.

In order to understand how God is glorified in mercy and judgment we need to first understand the meaning of the word “glorify.” The Hebrew word for “glory” (kabhodh - כָּבוֹד) came to mean “honor”, but not simply honor as an abstract quality. Rather, it denoted the physical display of something that made a person or object impressive to the observer; it caused them to marvel or feel a sense of amazement or wonder. For this reason, the trees of Lebanon were called its glory (Isa. 60:13); they were what Lebanon was renowned for. In a similar sense, a field full of wild flowers can be a breathtaking spectacle. It is the flower, not the grass, that makes the plant glorious; thus the flower is referred to as the glory of the grass (Isa. 40:6), for it is the characteristic of the grass that men take notice of it. People are admired for wealth or nobility, so these things could be spoken of as a man’s glory. Likewise, God’s glory refers to the manifest qualities or attributes of God that make Him impressive, or cause us to marvel at His splendor.

God’s glory is often seen in displays of power. Creation (Ps. 19:1) and other great acts (Ex. 14:17 f.; Ps. 96:3) reveal His glory. His luminous presence in the sanctuary caused people to be struck with awe and was called His glory (Ex. 40:34 ff.; I Ki. 8:10 ff.; Ps. 26:8). This is also true of things that can be seen with the eyes of faith. Paul says in Titus 3:4 that “the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared.” Though we did not see Christ die on the cross with our own eyes, we have seen it by faith.

God’s righteousness displayed in wrath or of His mercy displayed in salvation also bring God glory. And so it is with God’s holiness, His love, His purity, and any other theme that could be named. All of these themes appear as manifestations of the intrinsic glory of the God whom the Bible presents, making His glory known.

Throughout the Bible, salvation, judgment, and the glory of God go hand in hand.


In the OT, Israel’s exodus from Egypt was the foundational redemptive event in the nation’s history. In that event the children of Israel saw God’s righteous judgment on Egypt as they were delivered from slavery and so they praised God for His mercy and justice. God’s renown in saving His people is the song of the remnant throughout salvation history (e.g. Isa. 26:8), and will be their song in the ages to come (Rev. 7:9-12).

As the Old Testament regards the exodus from Egypt as an expression of the glory of God in salvation and judgment, so the NT regards the death of Christ.
Though the judgment of God for sin fell upon Christ at the cross, John repeatedly indicates that Jesus will be glorified through it. In John 12:23, when Jesus referred to His suffering and death He said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Jesus then prayed in 12:28, "Father, glorify your name," then a voice came from heaven, "Indeed, I glorified and again I will glorify". Later, after Judas had gone out to betray Him, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify himself in him, and immediately he will glorify him" (Jn. 13:31-32). Likewise, in John 17:1 Jesus prayed, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the son might glorify you" (cf. also 17:5). These statements in John depict the cross as the place of judgment and as the place where the Father and the Son are glorified.

The way in which the cross glorifies the Father is seen in Romans 3:25-26 where Paul explains, "God put Him forward as a propitiation through faith in His blood for the demonstration of His righteousness on account of the passing over of sins that had been previously committed in the forbearance of God, for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the one who justifies the one who by faith belongs to Jesus."

Prior to the cross, God passed over sins and accepted an animal sacrifice instead of the actual payment that was due. Then to demonstrate His righteousness — for passing over sins appears to be unjust — God put Jesus forward to make propitiation by His death on the cross. God did this "in order that He might be just" (3:26). Having thus satisfied His own justice, God can justly justify the ungodly people who trust in Jesus.

God’s judgment of Christ on the cross glorifies God because it demonstrates His perfect justice, His absolute commitment to His own holiness. Further, it glorifies God because at great cost He made a way to preserve His justice and yet show mercy. Jesus is glorified in his ability to propitiate the wrath of God against sin (cf. 1 John 2:1-2, and in his willingness to "lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

God is glorified at the cross as He establishes a way to be just and be merciful. God is glorified at the cross in salvation through judgment.

At the end of all things, judgment and salvation are still a means to bring God glory.

Although space does not allow for every passage in Scripture to demonstrate that God is glorified through the destruction of His enemies and the salvation of His people, three passages will be used by way of illustrating this point.

In Isaiah 66:23-24 we read:

23 "And it shall be from new moon to new moon and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all mankind will come to bow down before Me," says the LORD.
I Peter 1

24 "Then they will go forth and look on the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm will not die and their fire will not be quenched; and they will be an abhorrence to all mankind."

In this passage, people from all nations will give glory to Yahweh, and their worship will be, in part, due to their awareness of what Yahweh has done to his enemies. Those who worship Him will do so because they see the might of Yahweh exercised in the subjugation of those who hate Him. They see the unending holiness of Yahweh in his commitment to exact against the rebels. Furthermore, they realize that they, too, deserve the fate of the rebels but that Yahweh has shown them mercy and made them His worshipers. Yahweh has saved some from all nations who deserved his wrath, and these people praise Him as He shows His mercy and his justice. God is glorified in salvation through judgment.

A similar statement is made in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10:

"... the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed."

God’s justice, through which the Thessalonians will be saved, is part of the reason that they will ‘glorify’ and ‘marvel at’ the Lord when he comes (2 Thess. 1:10a); the other reason for glorifying God is that God’s holiness is displayed by the unbelieving being punished by eternal destruction.

Revelation 19:1-6

1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God;

2 BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER."

3 And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER."

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!"

5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great."

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns."

Those who are saved respond to the justice and the mercy of God with praise, having been saved through his just judgment (Rev. 19:1-5). Their praise includes full awareness of the punishment of
God’s enemies, and the depiction of smoke going up forever in verse 3 seems to indicate that they praise Him for His unending justice. The Book of Revelation indicates that the goal of history is the glory of God in salvation through judgment.

Two points must not escape our notice. First, the wrath of God is not an attribute of God per se, but is the response of God’s holiness against sin. The severity of His wrath reveals the depth of His holiness. Those who want to minimize hell or remove it altogether, reduce the matchlessness of God’s absolute purity to something less than it is. If God does not punish sin severely, it is because He is not utterly holy. When God executes justice against the sinner, the splendor of His righteousness is displayed and God is glorified. In the same way, when God saves the sinner who deserves His wrath, the magnitude of God’s mercy and grace are manifested, and God is glorified. Romans 9:22—23 tells us that though God desires to demonstrate His wrath and make His power known by judging those who are in rebellion against Him (cf. Ro. 2:5), He endured them with patience (9:22) in order that He might make His glory known to us (vessels of mercy – 9:23).

**The judgment of the believer enhances the glory of God and motivates us to abandon sin.**

Sometimes it is hard for us to reconcile how exposing our sins at the judgment – including every secret thing whether good or evil – fits with the bliss of our resurrected life. “This difficulty only arises when we have restricted our thought to our own bliss and have overlooked the demands of the glory of God” (Murray, Collected Writings of John Murray, Vol 2, Systematic Theology, 313).

I believe that at the judgment we will be filled with horror and dread as our sins are unveiled. Hebrews 10:30-31 says, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE. It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Although, “His people” is referring to those Israelites who had professed Christ but then reverted back to Judaism, standing before a holy God is a terrifying experience to all. The prophet Isaiah was definitely a believer, and yet in Isaiah 6:3 he cried out, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). In a similar way, the apostle John when seeing the resurrected Christ in a vision said, “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man” (Rev. 1:17). This is the response of the sinner before God – even outside of the setting of judgment! How much more will we be overwhelmed when we stand in judgment! Nevertheless, our judgment “will not fill us with dismay, for it will also enhance our esteem for the marvels of redeeming grace, and serve to exhibit the perfect justice of God in the provision of His saving mercy. When sin is exposed in its true proportions and gravity, it is then that the glory of redemptive grace will be fully exhibited and the joy of the saints will reach its zenith. The bliss of heaven is not constituted by forgetting sin, but by glorying in the redemption that washed us from sin and made us white in the blood of the Lamb” (Murray, 314).

“The sanctification of sinners is indeed a wonder of wonders. But the wonder of what God really does in sanctifying a sinner is completely obscured if we forget that the fundamental thing in all this is that sinful men and women are absolutely unable to transform themselves from children of Adam into glorified vessels fit to bring honor to God. For if left to our own strength, we have
neither the willingness nor the power to accomplish this vital work. We cannot grow in grace and bear fruit of the Spirit. Bad trees cannot "make a decision" to bear good fruit. We are unable to break the strangle hold of sin and to end the dominion that it has over every part of our lives. As slaves, we simply cannot decide to be free and then merely pronounce ourselves emancipated. The tyranny and power of our oppressor is too great. Moreover, we will never live up to the absolute perfection that God requires of us. We are by nature neither able nor willing to cooperate with God." (author unknown)

At the time of judgment we will fully recognize that what we could not do through obedience, God did, "sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh . . . in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us" (Ro. 8:3-4). The reality of Romans 14:4 will be ours as well; we will discover that in ourselves we could never stand at the judgment, but that "the Lord is able to make us stand."

**God is glorified through His people.**

When we think of the glory of God, we need to think also of how God is glorified through His people. It is our glorification that demonstrates the far-reaching extent of Christ’s death and manifests the boundless grace of God poured out upon sinners. God’s grace is magnified and He is glorified when we, an undeserving, disobedient, and rebellious people, are saved from His wrath by the death of His Son. In Ephesians 2:6-7 it says that God “raised us up with Him [Christ], and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” From our vantage point, the grace of God is received as kindness, but the purpose of God in exalting us with Christ is to show His kindness to the universe. In other words, we are the vessels that He uses to demonstrate the greatness of His kindness to the rest of creation. For all eternity creation will marvel at the goodness of God and the surpassing riches of God’s grace and kindness which He has shown to us who are in Christ.

The songs of praise to the Lamb in Revelation 5:9-14 will be sung for all eternity:

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ‘You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.’ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.’ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.’ And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped” (Revelation 5:9-14).
In Romans 5:2, “we exult in hope of the glory of God.” Our hope is the hope of the manifestation of God’s own glory (cf. I Thess. 2:12; I Pet. 5:10). This is simply to say that our desire to see God glorified is supremely more desirable than our own experience in receiving glory at the end of our salvation. Therefore, we can rejoice even in the face of judgment for we know that though it may be painful for us, God will be glorified through it.

The ultimate end of our sanctification is in the glory of God, but a secondary goal of sanctification is in bringing our salvation to completion. Our salvation ends with the completion of God’s purposes that He has for us in Christ (Ro. 8:29-30). Of particular importance is Romans 8:29 that says, “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” The title “firstborn” refers to preeminence or priority in position and here refers to the preeminence of Christ. The glory we have is derived from our relationship to the Preeminent One.

Notice first that our glorification is said to consist of conformity to the image of the Son. Conformity to Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is the highest end conceivable for creation. . . “the highest end conceivable not only by men, but also by God himself. God himself could not contemplate or determine a higher destiny for his creatures” (Murray, 316).

But there is also a final end that is more glorious than this. The supreme glory of God will be manifested in the glorifying of the Son as the Preeminent One! We are not just predestined for our happiness, but through our glorification the preeminence of Christ will be displayed to all, forever.

Jesus is the glorious One, but our glory is enhanced by the relationship we hold to Him. “The fact that we will be called ‘brethren’ is the deepest mystery of community. . . This means that the preeminence of the Son as the firstborn carries with it a correlative eminence of the children of God. The unique dignity of the Son enhances the dignity bestowed upon the many sons who are brought to glory. Hebrews 2:1 states,” For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Murray, 316, 317).

“We thus see how in the final realization of the goal of sanctification, there is exemplified and vindicated to the fullest extent, an extent that staggers our thought by reason of its stupendous reality, the truth inscribed upon the whole process of redemption, from its inception of the electing grace of the Father (cf. Eph. 1:4; Ro. 8:29) to its consummation in the adoption (cf. Ro. 8:23; Eph. 1:5), that Christ in all His offices of Redeemer is never to be conceived of apart from the church, and the church is not to be conceived of apart from Christ. . . This is the goal of sanctification; this is the hope it enshrines, and thereby its demands upon us are invested with sanctions of surpassing glory” (Murray, 317).
**1 Peter 1:18-21**

18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,  
19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

*The redemption of the believer displays the glory of God and motivates us to abandon sin.*

In verses 15 and 16, Peter told us to be holy in all our behavior because God is holy. The first motivation to live a holy life is the fear of judgment (1:17). The second is based upon what we know of the death of Christ. We are to live holy lives for we know that we were redeemed with precious blood (Michaels, 63).

Christ paid an awful cost to save us from the evils of our former way of life. To follow our old lifestyle which God calls a “futile way of life” is to implicitly deny the value of Christ’s death.

The word “redeem” refers to the act of freeing someone from slavery through the payment of a price. The concept of redemption is found both in the OT and in the Greco-Roman world. In Roman culture, freedom from slavery could be purchased by the slave himself or a benefactor by depositing money into the treasury of the temple of a god or goddess. A portion of the money would be kept as a gift by the temple, and the rest would be taken and given to the slave’s master to purchase the slave. Once redeemed, the slave was treated as a free man in society, but would then be considered a slave to the god or goddess of the temple. This transfer of ownership was a legal fiction that, for all intents and purposes, didn’t have any ramifications in daily life (Jobes, 116, Carson, Commentary on the NT use of the OT, 1018). Nevertheless, Peter picks up this imagery in 2:16 where he says “Act as free men . . . but use your freedom as slaves of God.” In a similar way Paul says, “do you not know that . . . you are not your own? You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

In the OT, “redemption” is used when God delivered His people from foreign domination, either when they were in exile, or when they were first delivered from their slavery in Egypt. In Deuteronomy 7:8 the Lord says to His people that He “kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.” Then, when God’s people were in exile in Babylon, it says in Isaiah 52:3, “For thus says the LORD, "You were sold for nothing and you will be redeemed without money." Isaiah’s point is that they were redeemed without having to pay a price for their own redemption. Peter, on the other hand, focuses on the immense value that was paid for them. In Psalm 34:22, the concept of redemption goes beyond physical deliverance: “The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.”

Both the Jewish and Greco-Roman concepts of redemption are suited perfectly to illustrate and contrast the redemption that Peter’s readers have in Christ. First, redemption from exile fits their situation; Peter had already likened them to those in exile by addressing them as “those who reside as
aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1 Pet. 1:1). The idea of redemption in the Roman world made it easy to see how they had been purchased with something of much greater worth – the blood of a lamb, the blood of Christ.

In both Jewish and non-Jewish cultures, the ancestral way of life and the customs that were passed down were esteemed and venerated. Peter calls them futile (empty, meaningless). He is probably the first Christian writer ever to refer to the customs of the ancestors in a negative way.

Peter speaks of the manner in which we were redeemed (with the precious blood of Christ) and he talks about why we were redeemed (so that we will live holy lives), but he doesn’t elaborate on the effects of our redemption. In other words, Peter explains that the believer has been freed from slavery, but he doesn’t elaborate on what we are freed from. In the Bible, there are at least four specific ways that believers are redeemed (the following points have been adapted from Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 517 ff.):

1. Redemption frees us from **bondage to the law**. Redemption frees us from the obligation to satisfy the demands of the law.

   The law, which is derived from the nature of God, demands perfect obedience. It says, “Do this and live” and, “Cursed is every one that does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). No man since the fall has been able to fulfill these demands, yet He must fulfill them or perish. The only possible method, according to the Scriptures, by which men can be saved, is to be delivered from this obligation of perfect obedience. This, the Apostle teaches, has been brought about by Christ. He was “born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law”(Gal. 4:4-5). Therefore, in Romans 6:14 he says to believers, “You are not under the law, but under grace.” And this redemption from the law in Romans 7:4 is said to be “by the body of Christ.” Hence, we are justified not by our own obedience, but “by the obedience” of Christ (Rom. 5:18, 19).

   “Redemption in this case is not mere deliverance, but a true redemption, i.e., a deliverance effected by satisfying all the just claims which are against us. The Apostle says, in Galatians 4:5, that we are thus redeemed from the law, in order “that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Subjection to the law, in our case, is a state of bondage. Those under the law are, therefore, called slaves, δουλοὶ. From this state of bondage they are redeemed, and introduced into the liberty of the sons of God. This redemption includes freedom from a slavish spirit, which is supplanted by a spirit of adoption, filling the heart with reverence, love, and confidence in God as our reconciled Father” (Hodge, Systematic Theology, II, 518).

2. Redemption frees us from the **penalty of the law**. We have already seen that we are no longer obligated to the demands of the law – this means that we are also free from its penalty.
Every sin subjects the sinner to the penalty of the law, namely, the wrath and curse of God. The Bible tells us that “The wages of sin is death” (Ro. 6:23). The first step, therefore, in the salvation of sinners, is their redemption from that curse. Until this is done, they are separated from God which of necessity involves both misery and subjection to the power of sin. As long as men are under the curse, they are cut off from the only source of holiness and life. Therefore, they need to be redeemed, or freed from the penalty of the law.

Galatians 3:10-13

10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”
11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”
12 But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.”
13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us— for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. From God’s perspective, Christians are viewed as having died with Christ and as such are released from authority of the law (Ro. 7:6). We have become the righteousness of God in Christ (I Cor. 1:30), and that is why Paul can say “there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ” (Ro. 8:1, 2).

Although we are accountable for our actions and our lives will be judged (evaluated) by God (I Pet. 1:17), we have been redeemed from the penalty – eternal death. Our fate is not determined by how well we satisfy the law’s demands for we have been redeemed from the obligation of the law and have become sons.

3. Redemption frees us from the power of sin. “Whosoever commits sin,” says our Lord, “is the slave of sin” (Jn. 8:34). This is a bondage from which no man can deliver himself. To bring this deliverance was the great object of the mission of Christ. He gave Himself that He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works (Titus 2:14). He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God (I Pet. 3:18). He loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it unto Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:27). This deliverance from sin is a true redemption. It is a deliverance accomplished by a ransom, the satisfaction of justice, that was the necessary condition of restoration to the favor of God; and restoration to his favor was the necessary condition of holiness. Therefore, it is said in Titus 2:14, that Christ “gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity.” The aim, purpose, and design of the ransom of I Peter 1:18 is not forgiveness, but transformation. To paraphrase, Peter is saying, “Conduct yourself in a way that shows that the blood of Christ is precious to you.”

4. The Scriptures teach that Christ redeems us from the power of Satan. Satan is said to be the prince and god of this world (Eph. 2:2; cf. 2 Cor. 4:4). His kingdom is the kingdom of darkness, in which all men, since Adam, are born, and in which they remain, until translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col. 1:13). They are his subjects “taken captive by him at his will” (2 Tim. 2:26). The first promise was that
the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, to cast him down from his place of usurped power, and to deliver those who are subject to his dominion. The fact of this redemption of his people from the power of Satan, and the mode of its accomplishment, are clearly stated in Hebrews 2:14-15, “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

The believer’s hope and faith (1:20-21)

The preciousness of Christ (and therefore His sacrifice) is expanded upon by verses 20 and 21.

20 For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you
21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Christ, as a sacrifice, was “foreordained before the foundation of the world.” “The foreordination of all the details of history is the constant representation of Scripture (Rom. 11:33-36; Acts 2:23). The foreknowledge of Christ’s redeeming death corresponds to the foreknowledge of those who would receive it (1:2). The preciousness of Christ’s blood is seen in that Christ is the center of God’s redemptive plan, a plan that wasn’t an afterthought in the mind of God, but foreordained before the ages. He is the perfect, spotless sacrifice that fully appeased the wrath of God for sin. What makes these verses so staggering is that Peter says that the foreordination of Christ’s redemptive work and His appearance in time is specifically said to be for our sake! . . . so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Greek word that is translated as “so that” (hoste - ὅστε), is used to express intended result or purpose rather than simple result (Michaels, 70). God’s intended purpose in raising Jesus from the dead and giving Him glory was so that we would hope in God.

SUMMARY:

Verses 13-21 are a call to holy living that is based on the great salvation that the prophets spoke about, and has been experienced by us (1:10). This salvation came about according to the foreknowledge of God (1:2), and was enacted in history when He called us to Himself (1:15), “according to His great mercy He caused us to be born again” (1:3). It is a salvation reserved in heaven and protected by the power of God (1:4-5).

Peter began this section with “blessed be God” (1:3), and now concludes it with our hope resting in Him. Faith in Christ is faith in God. Thus ends the doctrinal section of the book.

Redemption is the price God paid to make us His own. It demonstrates that we are a people of great value for we have a price tag affixed to us and God paid the highest price possible to get us. Thomas Watson said, "Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption. It cost more to
redeem us than to make us. In the one there was but the speaking of a word. In the other there was shedding blood. The creation was but the work of God’s fingers. Redemption is the work of His arm.”

After 12 verses of exultation over what God has done to give us hope, Peter gives us four commands in the rest of this chapter. So far he has told us to fix our eyes completely on God’s grace (1:13), and to be holy in our behavior (1:15). Now in 1:22-2:3 he gives us two more commands; we are to fervently love one another from the heart (1:22) and to long for the word of God (2:3).

1 Peter 1:22-2:3

1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,
1:23 for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God.

1. Fervently love one another from the heart

The authentic Christian life cannot be lived in isolation. Coming to Christ and entering into the new covenant with Him also means coming into a relationship with others who have been chosen by God. Christian love is based on righteous character lived out in community (1:22; 2:1), a community that God calls a spiritual house in which His people offer up acceptable sacrifices (2:5).

Verses 22 and 23 state why it is possible for us to love each other from the heart. We can love because we have been born again and have had our souls purified.

Grammatically, these verses go together like this:

Since you have purified your souls . . . . love one another from the heart.

(love one another from the heart) . . . . for you have been born again.

The Greek word translated as “purify” is consistently used in the Greek OT, the Gospels, and Acts to refer to a ceremonial act where somebody intentionally and voluntarily consecrates himself to God (Num. 6:2-3; Jobes, 123). The perfect tense verb (have purified) indicates that they are now in a state of separation brought about by their previous act of obedience to the truth (Jobes, 123).

“Obedience to the truth” in verse 22 is most likely obedience to the truth of the gospel. If this is the case, then Peter is saying that Christians are to love one another, because by obeying the truth of the gospel (by coming to faith in Christ) they have set themselves apart from the ways of the world and are now capable of loving people differently than the world does.

Secondly, they can love others for they have been born again.

How does being born again give us the ability to love others?

The new birth generates spiritual life that comes from an imperishable seed (1:23), the word of God. This is a higher form of life with higher capacities to love than we have naturally. In its greatest glory, the life
that comes to us through our earthly parents lasts no longer than flowers or grass. The life of the believer is eternal in nature, for it has been generated by the living and enduring word of God.

I Peter 1:24 For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off,
1:25 But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you.

I Peter 1:24-25a is a quote from Isaiah 40:7, 8. In Isaiah 40 it says:

3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.
4 "Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley;
5 Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed, And all flesh will see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
6 A voice says, "Call out." Then he answered, "What shall I call out?" All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.
9 Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
10 Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, With His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him.
11 Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs And carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes. (Isaiah 40:3

The words of Isaiah are the promise that God will redeem His people from exile in Babylon “without silver and without price” (Isa. 55:1; I Pet. 1:18). Peter’s readers, like the captives in Babylon, had lost all their earthly possessions and could easily succumb to a feeling of hopelessness or turn from God in unbelief. They needed to be reminded of the hope they had. Throughout chapter 1, many of the themes in Isaiah 40 have been implicitly mentioned. The glory of the LORD promised in Isaiah 40:5 was revealed in Christ (I Pet 1:10-12), the people of God had been redeemed (Isa. 55:1 cf. I Pet. 1:18), the good news had come (Isa. 40:9 cf. I Pet 1:12). (Notice also the close connection to the gospel between Isaiah 40:3-4 and Mark 1:1-3). In short, their present experience was evidence that the word of the Lord stands forever (Isa. 40:8). They need not despair or abandon their hope in God. Even in exile His covenant with His people doesn’t fail.

Peter says that the word that abides forever is the word that was preached to them. The Greek word for “preached” is euaggelizo (ἐυαγγελίζω) which is most commonly translated as “to preach good news” or “to preach the gospel.” Although none of God’s Word will perish, there is a link between verses 24-25 and verse 22. The imperishable seed is the word of God that abides forever. It is this word that has been preached and has caused us to be born again.
The power of the word of God is found throughout the Bible.

“The writer to the Hebrews declared, “The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, . . . and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). Interestingly, the word “living” is applied by the same author to God Himself (3:12; 9:14; 10:31; 12:22). The living God sends His Word forth with His life. And because the Word is “living,” it is also “active.” . . .

Throughout Scripture God effects His will by His powerful word. All the vastness of the universe came into existence by His word. Eight times in Genesis 1, we read the words, “And God said. . . .” As the Scripture writer says, “The worlds were prepared by the word of God” (Heb. 11:3). And the psalmist affirmed, “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made” (Ps. 33:6). And all things continue to exist, for they are sustained “by the word of His power” (Heb. 1:3). . .

God’s words are like powerful messengers that run throughout the earth to accomplish His will. “He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly” (Ps. 147:15). . . .

The “new birth,” the miraculous transformation of a person who is spiritually dead, comes about by the power of the Word. In the parable of the sower Jesus likened the Word of God to seed (Luke 8:11). A grain of wheat or kernel of corn may look lifeless, but when planted in the ground it produces a living plant. Similarly, the Bible, God’s written Word, may seem like any other book, but when it is planted in the soil of the human heart, it has amazing power to produce spiritual life. . . . God continually appeals to people to receive His Word as the means to life and salvation: “Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good. . . . Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live” (Isa. 55:2-3). (Saucy, Scripture, 3-8)

James follows the same idea as Peter in using the image of the implantation of a seed to demonstrate the reception of the gospel.

In James 1:18 he says, “In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures.”

The new birth is described as “being brought forth.” The NIV simply says, “He chose to give us birth.”

The means by which new birth comes to us is “by the Word of truth.” It is through the proclamation of the gospel spoken of in the Word of God that spiritual life comes into being (Ro. 1:16-17; 10:13-15).

In James 1:18, “so that” indicates God’s purpose in giving us new life, namely, that we might be the first fruits among His creatures. “Firstfruits” was an offering in the OT where the first produce of the harvest was given to God (Exo. 23:19; Lev. 23:9-11; Deut. 18:4). It anticipated the completion of the harvest. Someday, the whole earth will be renewed (Matt. 19:28; Ro. 8:19-22; Rev. 21:1), and believers are the first among all creation to experience this renewal. (The word for creatures is ktisma" [κτίσμα]"
which generally refers to the creation or created things, not just men). In other words, the new birth is
the first stage of God’s renovation project.

A second verse is in James 1:21 which says, “Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that
remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.”

We are to receive the Word implanted. “Implantation” is a farming term related to seed sowing
and reminds us of Peter’s reference to the word as an “imperishable seed.” For the growth of a plant to
occur, the soil must be hospitable to the seed. It is not enough just to listen to the Word without
rejecting it. The Word needs to be “received” or “welcomed” if it is to produce fruit in our lives (cf. Matt.
13:3-9; 18-23).

It should be noticed that James does not tell us to plant the Word in our hearts. God in an
exercise of His will has already planted it, making us the firstfruits (1:18). Rather, James is telling us to
accept the demands of the Word that was already implanted. Allow the Word to take root and grow as
part of the new life. This entails being humble, submitting to God’s Word, and being instructed by it.

The Word, when it is implanted is powerful, for it is able to save the human soul.

“The apostle Paul taught and experienced in his own ministry the power of the Word in bringing
people to new life and salvation. “The word of the cross,” he said, “is the power of God” (1 Cor.
1:18, 21). “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to
everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

Life is found only through union with Christ, and that union with Christ is attained solely through
faith produced by the powerful Word. As Paul wrote, “Faith comes from hearing the message,
and the message is heard through the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17, NIV). In other words, the
message is the power that incites faith” (Saucy, Scripture, 8).

2. Long for the pure milk of the word

REVIEW: Since we have had our hearts purified (consecrated) by the gospel, we have been
given the capacity to love in a way that separates us from the world. We have also been born again of an
imperishable seed, the living and abiding word of God (1:23) which has made us new people. This seed is
the good news that we have been reading about in this chapter; the ransom of the blood of Christ (vv.
18–19), the resurrection of Christ (vv. 3, 21), the keeping power of God (v. 5), and our inheritance (v. 4).
The point in verse 25 is that all of this is not like grass and flowers: it doesn't wither and fall; it abides
forever. If this Word is your life, you live forever.