

# The End of Faith

January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

1 Peter 1:3-9

- 3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

## Chronological Order

"What is the chronological order of events in verse 3?"

- God's abundant mercy
- Death of Christ
- Resurrection of Christ
- Birth of us who believe
- Our experiencing a 'living hope'
- Praise to God

SEQ: mercy -> sacrificial death -> birth of believers -> hope -> praise to God

## Words of Life

Note the words of life: begotten, living, resurrection

Note again that they all spring from death

We don't think of death in this way ~ as producing life

Death is not normal ~ Death is the opposite of normal

- We've isolated ourselves from death
- We've separated ourselves from the reality of death
- On a battlefield soldiers often die with their eyes open
  - Read of one soldier who left eyes open to feign death
- Accident: Bus stop story ~ watched the man die ~ unprepared, unwilling to help
- If death is abnormal or strange ~ then resurrection is more so
  - "How many of us haven't watched a movie where a dead person wakes up?"
  - For every cute ET or Starman there are a dozen where zombies eat people...
- Comedian: "What do you want people to say about you at your funeral?"
  - "Look, he's moving!"

## The Resurrection of Christ

But the Death and Resurrection of Christ led to wonderful things

It is the key to Christianity

Other miracles may be more amazing or bizarre

- Balaam's donkey, Sun's shadow travelling backwards, Elijah's chariot of fire

It's crazy that modern Christianity is downplaying blood, death, even Christ

**Xition**: Where does this 'living hope' lead us?

- 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

### **Living Hope Leads to an Inheritance**

Three features of this inheritance are given:

- Incorruptible ~ Undefiled ~ Does not fade away

And one describes its location ([heaven](#)) ~ And recipient ([you](#))

### **Inheritance Reserved in Heaven for You**

*"An inheritance awaits us in heaven" ~ "What else awaits us?"*

I propose there are 3 things awaiting us in heaven

- Inheritance ~ described here (1 Peter 1:4)
- Treasure ~ moth and rust do not corrupt (Matthew 6 ~ rewards of faithfulness)
- Reward ~ "I am your exceeding great reward" (Genesis 15:1)

Perhaps you think me too mercenary or capitalistic in my views

- But methinks Christian capitalists do best at keeping the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment

But what is referred to here is an inheritance

*"Do all of our inheritances have to be the same?" ~ NO...*

- Our inheritance is God... But I also think more is hinted at
- It will be just what God wants each of us to have with which to begin eternity

### **Inheritance ~ Attributes**

Incorruptible / Imperishable

- Not subject to death, or destruction
- No fire or flood will destroy it or carry it away

Undefiled

- Never decay or be polluted ~ never a blemish
- All earthly inheritance is subject to loss ~ not this

Unfading

- Beauty fades ~ whether human beauty or nature's beauty (grass withers flower fades)
- Time wears away even silver and gold ~ not this

### **Heavenly Storage Units**

Reserved for you: Not just collectively ~ but individually as well

People love good surprises ~ This one awaits each one of us ~ it is reserved

Storage Units: The contents of them are auctioned off

- Krutz's lost one through error years back
- One man found \$44,000 (but every bill had the same serial #)
- Our heavenly storage units will be ours... An inheritance from God who knows us...

Santa Claus: High School reunion ~ party ~ everyone gets gift they always wanted

**Xition**: Verse 5 goes on to talk more about us...

5 [you] who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

### **Faith ~ First function ~ "kept"**

1<sup>st</sup> of 3 appearances of the word faith in this portion of text

Faith performs 3 different functions (v5, 7 and 9)

First (v5) ~ "kept by the power of God through faith"

- This word "kept" can be translated "guard" or "shield" ~ military term
- The same word is used in Philippians 4:6-7 ~ "*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"
  - In Phillipians it is the "*peace of God*" that does the guarding
  - Here in 1 Peter it is the "*power of God*" working through faith
- Faith functions as a guard in our lives ~ your faith is your spiritual body guard
- Secret Service instituted Presidential protection in 1901 ~ "lifetime"
  - President-elects, sitting Presidents and former Presidents (and immediate family)
  - Late 1993 ~ 5 families being guarded (Nixon, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton)
  - In 1997 reduced to 10 years for former Presidents
- **We** have lifetime protection ~ from new birth to physical death, faith guards us

### **Ready to be revealed**

"*What is ready to be revealed?*" ~ Our salvation

- Our salvation is concealed at present ~ In heaven it will be revealed
- Christians talk a lot about being "saved"
  - But unbelievers can't see the value of what we're saying we have
  - They live just as pleasant of lives as us... (Psalm 73 – Asaph)
- And as for life after death, well "*Who can really know?*"

The value of salvation will be demonstrated to ALL when ALL is revealed

**Xition:** In verse 6 Peter goes on to a new thought... earthly trials...

6 In this [salvation] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials,

### “Various trials”

These trials are not brought upon us due to our sin

- That was the mistake of Job’s 3 friends...

They may more be due to our faithfulness ~ just as with Job

We’ll get to the reason for this a bit later...

### Note 3 things Peter says about our trials

1) They last only a little while ~ even should they last our entire lives

2) Trials we face are not arbitrary ~ they come only if need be...

- Matthew Henry: “*These troubles, that lie heavy, never come upon us but when we have need, and never stay any longer than needs must.*”

3) Trials merely grieve us

- They do not destroy us, they do not conquer us, they do not condemn us
- To the contrary, they strengthen us and our walk with God

### Trials Do Not Compare to Future Reward

All of our trials, regardless of how painful they may truly be in earthly terms, when viewed in light of what awaits us merely...

Grieve us ~ for a little while ~ by God’s design

Paul said this in Romans 8:18 ~ “*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*”

Keep this last phrase in mind, “the glory to be revealed in us”.

- We’ll talk about it when we consider the next verse...

### But before we leave this verse... ~ “Greatly Rejoice”

Rejoicing in our salvation should drown out the sadness of our trials

The ratio between your joy and your grief over trials should be large...

If it is not, if days and weeks go by without you experiencing joy, you remain

- willfully unaware of the tremendous blessing of your salvation
- and you’re likely wallowing in self pity over your trials

If you are a believer and you lack joy in your salvation... ~ know this

- God did not take it away... You cast it away...
- Your hands are too full of your grief to hold onto God’s joy...
- Matthew Henry: “*A good Christian’s condition is never so bad but he has great reason still to bless God. As a sinner has always reason to mourn, notwithstanding his present prosperity, so good people, in the midst of their manifold difficulties, have reason still to rejoice and bless God.*”

**Xition:** And now Peter shares the reason for the trials we sometimes face...

7 that the genuineness of **your faith**, *being* much more precious than gold that perishes, though **it** is tested by fire, may be found to **praise**, **honor**, and **glory** at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

### **Faith ~ Second function ~ means by which God prepares us for glory**

Here is the 2<sup>nd</sup> reference to faith in our text

- First (v5) ~ "*kept by the power of God through faith*"
- Second (v7) ~ "*that your faith ... may be found to praise, honor and glory*"

Only real gold survives the flames

- The gold that remains is more pure and more valuable

Only real faith survives the trials

- The faith that remains is stronger and more pure

Fire removes the dross from gold ~ the impurities surface and are skimmed off

Trials remove the dross from our faith ~ they surface (in our heart) and are eliminated

**Real faith** is strengthened ~ redounding to our:

- Praise ~ Christ will praise us for having endured
- Honor ~ He will honor us before our brethren for successful service
- Glory ~ And our glory will also shine like purified gold shines

Matthew Henry: "[T]he faith of good people is tried, that they themselves may have the comfort of it, God the glory of it, and others the benefit of it."

### **All Awaiting the Revelation of Jesus Christ**

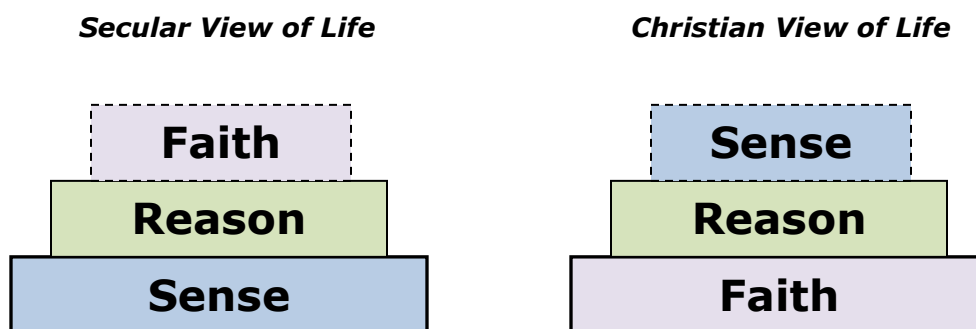
The 2<sup>nd</sup> time Peter refers to reveal at end of time (v5 too)

Faith is essential to living the Christian life

Hebrews 11:6: "Without faith it is impossible to please God ... he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Attempts to serve God without believing faith go nowhere

### **Sense, Reason and Faith**



**Xition**: In verse 8 we read more about Jesus...

8 [Jesus Christ] whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see *Him*, yet believing, you rejoice with *joy inexpressible* and full of glory,

### **We Love Jesus ~ Having Never Seen Him**

We are just as the people to whom Peter is writing

- They were Jews who'd been awaiting the Messiah
- They know He had come ~ but they had just missed Him
- Even those who persecuted Jesus, and were later saved, had their memories

But we are just like them...

Our love of Him and our belief in Him springs from our FAITH

Without faith, we would consider Him no better than any other great man

### **"Joy Inexpressible"**

Again Peter mentions the great joy we have as believers

- "Have you ever experienced *inexpressible JOY* when reflecting on Christ?"
- "Have you ever had to stop reading God's Word for tears of joy?"
- "If not, why not?"
  - I'm not saying you have to become a blubbing fool like I have at times
  - But does God have your heart? Is it in His hands? Or is it still your own?
- Perhaps you're young and you don't yet understand your salvation...
- Perhaps you're older and these feelings were last felt long ago...
- But perhaps you've never sought God like He means for you to seek Him...
- Only you and God know the truth...

### **Believing -> Receiving**

I must now borrow a word from verse 9 ~ receiving

- Here in verse 8 we read, "*yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible*"
- And in verse 9 we read, "*receiving ... the salvation of your souls.*"

In belief we surrender our opposition to God...

- We are won over by Him...
- We are made His prisoner...
- But what a prison awaits us

**Xition:** We now come to the title of the sermon...

9 receiving the **end of your faith** — the salvation of *your* souls.

### Salvation of Our Souls

We have been saved, yet total salvation is yet in the future

Justification, Sanctification and Glorification together constitute Salvation

- From the moment we were born again we were justified
- At that moment we began the process of sanctification
- When we one day join Jesus in heaven we will be glorified

We have been saved, yet we are still to fully experience salvation

- The Holy Spirit is in us as an earnest deposit against our final redemption
- Salvation is one of those already <-> not yet things that Pastor Kayser mentioned

### Faith ~ Third function ~ Salvation of Our Souls

And here is the 3<sup>rd</sup> (and last) reference of faith in our text

- First (v5) ~ "kept by the power of God through faith"
- Second (v7) ~ "that your faith ... may be found to praise, honor and glory"
- Third (v9) ~ Faith results in the salvation of our immortal souls

### The End of Your Faith

END can refer to a goal ~ Such as in "*What is the chief end of man?*"

But it can also refer to the termination of something... Such as The End of book or movie

Former meaning is intended here

- Salvation is the intended purpose or end of our faith ~ the goal or objective

But the 2<sup>nd</sup> meaning can be applied as well ~ FAITH is no longer needed in heaven

- When our salvation is complete, we will no longer need faith
  - Not as it is biblically defined
  - Hebrews 11:1: "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen...*"
- In heaven we will see God ~ We will see the evidence that is invisible here on Earth
  - Our eyes (our senses) will take this in ~ So will the eyes of unbelievers
  - Philippians 2:9-11 ~ "*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"
- Each of the three functions of faith we've discovered in verses 5, 7 and 9 are completed
  - We are 1) safe in heaven, 2) have received our reward, and 3) have total salvation

When we stand in heaven in the presence of God we will not need faith

### Prayer and Benediction (Numbers 6)

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January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009

1 Peter 1:3-9

## Verse 3

- Sequence: mercy -> sacrificial death -> birth of believers -> hope -> praise to God
- Words of life ~ springing from death and resurrection

## Verse 4

- Living hope leads to an inheritance ~ reserved for you in heaven
- 3 things waiting for you in heaven 1) inheritance, 2) treasure and 3) reward
- Heavenly storage units

## Verse 5

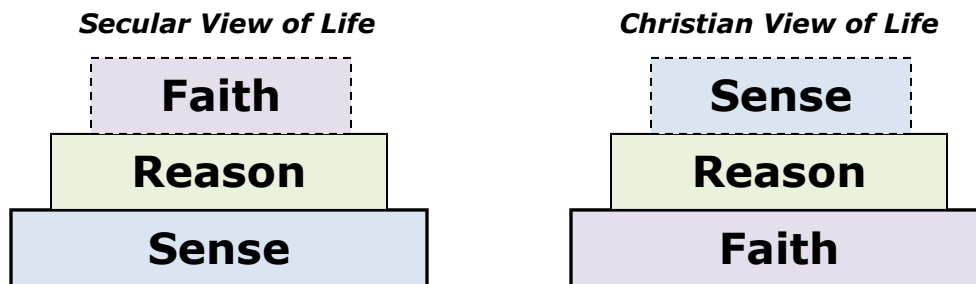
- First function of faith (personal spiritual secret service agent)
- Our salvation is now concealed ~ In heaven it will be revealed

## Verse 6

- Earthly trials 1) last only a little while, 2) come only if need be and 3) merely grieve us
- The sadness of these trials do not compare to the joy that awaits us
- We can and must greatly rejoice, even in the midst of our trials

## Verse 7

- Second function of faith (means to prepare us for praise, honor and glory)



## Verse 8

- We love the Jesus we've never seen ~ just as those to whom Peter is writing
- Have you ever experienced joy inexpressible?*
- Believing Christ leads to -> ...

## Verse 9

- ... Receiving the salvation of our souls
- Third and last function of faith (salvation of our souls)
- Complete salvation consists of 1) justification, 2) sanctification and 3) glorification
- The END of our faith