



LESSON TWO

A Living Hope and The Inheritance

Scripture Reading:

1 Peter 1:1-9

- 1:1** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
- 1:2** Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father in the sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.
- 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- 1:4** Unto an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you,
- 1:5** Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time;
- 1:6** In which time you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials,
- 1:7** So that the proving of your faith, much more precious than of gold which perishes though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- 1:8** Whom having not seen, you love; into whom though not seeing Him at present, yet believing, you exult with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory,
- 1:9** Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

QUESTIONS:

Section 1:

1. Why did Peter use the definite article before “God” in 1 Peter 1:3?
2. Please explain the term “regeneration”, how were we regenerated?
3. What is the living hope spoken of in 1 Peter 1:3?

Section 2:

1. How can we say that our inheritance is better than that of the children of Israel?
2. As those who have been regenerated, what is our inheritance and when will we receive it?
3. When can we possess and enjoy this inheritance?

Section 3:

1. Why do we need to be guarded in order to enjoy our heavenly inheritance today? How are we guarded?
2. What is the ‘salvation’ in verse 5 referring to?
3. Explain the three stages of God’s full salvation.

Section 4:

1. Explain the two aspects of sanctification and the two sides of sanctification after justification.
2. What is the ‘last time’ in verse 5? What should be our attitude when we consider it?
3. What is the purpose of ‘the various trials’ in verse 6?

-----[INTRODUCTION]-----

In the writings of Peter a single word is often rich in meaning. Take, for example, Peter's use of the word "sprinkling" in 1:2. In this verse Peter speaks concerning the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." As Peter wrote these words, it seems he was saying, "You scattered Jewish believers are familiar with the sprinkling of the blood of sheep and goats described in the Old Testament. However, you must realize that the sprinkling of animal blood is a type of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The old sprinkling, the sprinkling of the blood of animals, merely brought God's people into the Old Testament blessing. But the new sprinkling, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, brings us into the full enjoyment of God's new covenant." By this example we see that in the Epistles of Peter a single word can indicate a great deal.

-----[SECTION 1]-----

**THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST**

In 1:3 Peter goes on to say, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has regenerated us unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead." We need to pay close attention to the definite article used before the word "God." In this verse Peter speaks not only of God, but speaks of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The unbelieving Jews knew about God. Their God was the One who created the universe. But these Jews would not believe that their God was also the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is an important difference here. Of course, it is not true to say that the Jews believe in one God and that Christians believe in a different God. The crucial point here is that there is a great difference between the understanding and realization concerning God among Jews and among Christians. According to the understanding of the Jews, God is the Creator of the universe, but He is not the God and Father of Jesus Christ. In our understanding, however, God is both the Creator of the universe and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 20:17). This is the reason Peter uses the definite article before "God" in 1:3.

In 1:3 Peter declares that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has regenerated us unto a living hope according to His great mercy. Here

we see that once again Peter uses an adjective: he speaks not merely of God's mercy, but speaks of His great mercy. Paul also speaks concerning God's mercy, but he does not use the adjective "great" to describe it.

REGENERATED UNTO A LIVING HOPE

From 1:3 we see that the Father has not only chosen us, but has also regenerated us. In 1:1 through 3 we have four actions in the following sequence: choosing, sanctifying, redeeming, and regenerating. In eternity past God chose us, selected us. Then His Spirit came to us to separate us. Following that, we received the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, the application of His redemption. At the very moment we were sprinkled outwardly by the blood, we were inwardly regenerated by the sanctifying Spirit. Therefore, following God's choosing, the Spirit's sanctifying, and Christ's redeeming, we were regenerated.

Regeneration, like redemption and justification, is an aspect of God's full salvation. Redemption and justification solve our problem with God and reconcile us to God. Regeneration enlivens us with God's life and brings us into a relationship of life, an organic union, with God. Hence, regeneration issues and results in a living hope. Such regeneration takes place through the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. When Christ was resurrected, we, His believers, were all included in Him. Thus, we were resurrected with Him (Eph. 2:6). In His resurrection He imparted the divine life into us and made us the same as He is in life and nature. This is the basic factor of our regeneration.

To be regenerated is to receive another life, the divine life, in addition to the human life. We all received the human life from our parents. But because of God's choosing, the Spirit's sanctifying, and Christ's redeeming, God begets us, regenerates us. As a result, we have a second birth. Through regeneration God the Father imparts the divine life into us. Therefore, the first birth was the birth of our human life, and the second birth, the birth of the divine life. We all have been born of the divine life. This is what it means to be regenerated.

In 1:3 Peter tells us that we have been regenerated unto a living hope. The Greek word rendered "unto" means issuing in, resulting in, with a view to. God has regenerated us with a view to a living hope. This hope in our pilgrimage today is for the future. It is not a hope

of objective things; it is a hope of life, even eternal life, with all the endless divine blessings. It is this hope that we should set completely on the coming grace (1:13).

In verse 3 Peter speaks not merely of hope, but of a living hope. It is not easy to explain what this living hope is. Some may interpret it to mean a hope that is living and not dead. Yes, it is correct to say that the hope we have is living in contrast to a dead hope. Nevertheless, if we have the skill to interpret this expression according to our experience, we shall realize that more is involved. From experience we know that the life-giving Spirit has come into us to enliven us. Formerly we were dead, and everything related to us, in particular any expectation for the future, was also dead. But the enlivening which we have experienced through the life-giving Spirit results in a living hope, in the hope that everything related to us will become living.

When we were sprinkled with the blood of Christ, immediately the life-giving Spirit came into us to enliven us. Using the word “life” as a verb, we may say that the Spirit came into us to “life” us. Formerly we were dead and altogether without hope, but we have been “lived” through the life-giving Spirit unto a living hope. Now we have the hope that every part of our being will be lived. This is the living hope. To have a living hope is to be lived.

The regeneration of God the Father results in the hope that every part of our being and everything related to us will be lived, enlivened. Everything related to an unsaved person is dead. But with one who has been regenerated by God with the divine life, there is the hope that everything will be enlivened and thus become living.

In the Gospel of John the apostle John speaks about being born again. Although Paul does not use the word “regenerated” or the expression “born again,” in 1 Corinthians 4 he says something that indicates regeneration: he tells the believers that he begot them through the gospel. This is related to regeneration. But Peter is the only one who tells us clearly how we are regenerated and unto what we have been regenerated. We have been regenerated through the living and abiding word of God unto a living hope.

Through regeneration God has made us alive. In Adam we all are dead. When we were born of our parents, we were born dead. Furthermore, all unbelievers are dying a little more each day. All

of them are marching toward the tomb. Their destination is the tomb, and their destiny is death. Hence, in Adam every man is born dead and is also born to die. According to the Bible the gospel is preached not merely to sinners; it is also preached to those who are dead in Adam. We know from Peter’s word in 1:3 that through the means, the instrumentality, of the resurrection of Christ, God has regenerated us. Through Christ’s resurrection God has made us alive. In Adam we all died, but in Christ we all have been made alive.

Do you realize that you were born six thousand years ago, when Adam was created? If Adam had not been created, you would not have been born. Because we were born in Adam, we are all the same age—six thousand years. We also died in Adam. But nearly two thousand years ago, when Christ was resurrected, we were made alive, regenerated. According to the New Testament, when Christ was resurrected, we were resurrected in Him (Eph. 2:5-6). Hallelujah, although we were born with Adam, we have been reborn with Christ in His resurrection!

At this point I would quote a word from Dean Alford: “The resurrection of Christ, bringing in life and the gift of the life-giving Spirit, is that which potentiates the new birth into a living hope.” The concept here is deep. The resurrection of Christ potentiates our regeneration into a living hope. When we were regenerated, the resurrected Christ entered into us. He is not only the living One—He is also the resurrected One. Now He is the life within us that potentiates the new birth and causes every aspect of our being to become living. Therefore, regeneration results in a living hope.

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UNTO AN INHERITANCE

First Peter 1:4 says, “Unto an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, kept in the heavens for you.” At the end of verse 3 there is a comma, not a period. Then verse 4 begins with “unto.” This indicates that “unto an inheritance” in verse 4 is in apposition to “unto a living hope” in verse 3. This means that the living hope is the inheritance and that the inheritance is the living hope. A living hope, resulting from regeneration, is our expectation of the coming blessing; an inheritance is the

fulfillment of our hope in the coming age and in eternity.

The inheritance in verse 4 comprises the coming salvation of our souls (see verses 5 and 9), the grace to be received at the unveiling of the Lord (v. 13), the glory to be revealed (5:1), the unfading crown of glory (5:4), and the eternal glory (5:10). All these items of our eternal inheritance are related to the divine life which we received through regeneration and which we are experiencing and enjoying through our entire Christian life. "This inheritance is the full possession of that which was promised to Abraham and all believers (Gen. 12:3; see Gal. 3:6 ff.), an inheritance, as much higher than that which fell to the children of Israel in the possession of Canaan, as the sonship of the regenerate, who have already received the promise of the Spirit through faith as a pledge of their inheritance, is higher than the sonship of Israel: compare Gal. 3:18, 29; 1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Heb. 9:15" (Wiesinger, quoted by Alford).

At this point we need to ask an important question: Is this inheritance for us today, or is it only for the future? When I was young, I was taught that the inheritance in this verse refers to the eternal blessing, the blessing of eternity, which we shall enjoy in heaven. I was also taught that this inheritance is not for our enjoyment today, but is for us to enjoy in the future, after we die and go to our "heavenly mansion." Many Christians have been taught in this way. Others may think that in 1:4 Peter is speaking about an everlasting inheritance in contrast to the temporal inheritance of physical things. This kind of understanding is altogether natural; it is without light or revelation.

This verse does say that the inheritance is being kept for us in the heavens, but it does not say that the inheritance is for the future. However, as we read this verse, our natural mind may inject into it the thought of the future, even though this verse says nothing concerning the future. Often when we read the Bible we read things into it; we inject some element of our natural thought into God's revelation. This is serious! We should not regard the inheritance in 1:4 as only for the future. This inheritance is for us today, tomorrow, and for eternity. From the day we were regenerated this inheritance has been our portion.

An inheritance is a proper and legal possession. It is not gained by our energy, ability, or deeds. On the contrary, it is granted to us by another in

a way that is legitimate. We do not work for an inheritance; we receive it. On the day we were regenerated, we were given the right to share an inheritance. This inheritance includes all the blessings related to eternal life.

Our first birth gave us an inheritance. When we were born of our parents, we inherited God's creation. Because creation is our inheritance through birth, we can enjoy the air, the sunshine, and the rain. The money we pay for food actually goes to pay the cost of the labor. The food itself is given to us by God the Creator. If there were no sunshine, rain, or air, who could produce food? Food is a gift from God. By our first birth we have inherited the earth, the sunshine, the air, the atmosphere, the rain, and the wind. All these aspects of our earthly inheritance serve to keep us alive. Without such an inheritance, no one could live.

In the same principle, through our second birth, regeneration, we have been born into a new inheritance. This inheritance is not on earth; rather, it is kept in the heavens. Although the new inheritance is kept for us in the heavens, we can enjoy it now on earth. We may use as an illustration the application of electricity. Although electricity is stored in the power plant far away, we apply it and enjoy it daily in our homes. Electricity is transmitted from the power plant to our homes for our enjoyment. Likewise, our heavenly, divine, spiritual inheritance is kept in the heavens; yet it is continually being transmitted into our spirit for our enjoyment. Do you not enjoy the riches of the divine life?

As reborn ones, we can daily experience a divine transmission. When we call on the Lord Jesus, we may have the sense that something within us is connected to the heavens. Before we were regenerated, we never had this kind of realization. This transmission is the application and enjoyment of the inheritance kept in the heavens for us.

The strength of an electric current is measured in amperes. The greater the amperage, the stronger the current will be. The principle is the same in our experience of the divine transmission. When I was saved, the amperage of the transmission into me was quite small. But through the years, this heavenly amperage has increased so that now, especially when I minister, the amperage of the heavenly transmission is beyond my ability to measure.

We need to be impressed with the fact that the inheritance in 1:4 is for us today. It is not only for us to enjoy in the future. Once a man has been born on earth, he has the right to enjoy the earthly inheritance. In the same principle, once a person has been born again by God with His Spirit, that one is born unto a living hope, and this living hope is the inheritance of all the spiritual and heavenly blessings related to eternal life. Daily we need to take possession of this inheritance and enjoy it. This inheritance is legal, proper, and legitimate, for Christ has died to purchase it for us. He paid the price of His precious blood, and we have been sprinkled with this blood. Therefore, every day we may enjoy the riches of the divine life. Daily we may participate in the inheritance that is ours today and for eternity.

In verse 4 Peter uses three words to describe our inheritance: incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. "Incorruptible" refers to the substance, which is indestructible, not decaying; "undefiled," to its purity, to its being unstained; "unfading," to its beauty and glory, to its not withering. In contrast to any earthly inheritance, our heavenly inheritance is incorruptible, for it is not material. Anything material or physical is corruptible. But our inheritance kept in the heavens is divine and spiritual, altogether incorruptible. Furthermore, this inheritance cannot be defiled; nothing can make it unclean. Finally, it is unfading; its beauty and glory cannot wither. These are the excellent qualities of our eternal inheritance in life.

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GUARDED BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH

In verse 5 Peter says, "Who are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time." If we would enjoy our heavenly inheritance today and participate in it, we need to be guarded. This means that we need to be kept in the right position. Sometimes we are distracted and moved away from the position necessary to enjoy the heavenly inheritance. In the past we all have experienced, at least to some extent, that when we are carried away from the Lord by something, we lose the enjoyment of the inheritance of eternal life. Therefore, we need to be guarded, protected.

Thank the Lord that we are being guarded by the power of God through faith. The power of God is the means by which we are being guarded. Faith is the secondary means through which the power of God becomes effective in guarding us. Thus, the power of God is on God's side, and the faith is on our side. This indicates that we need to cooperate with the power of God. If we cooperate in this way, we shall be kept in the right position to enjoy our heavenly inheritance.

According to verse 5, we are being guarded, garrisoned (a military term), by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The result of this guarding is salvation. In this verse three prepositions are used concerning our coming salvation: by, through, and unto. By refers to cause, through to the means, and unto to the result.

DISPENSATIONAL PUNISHMENT

The salvation spoken of in verse 5 is full salvation, ultimate salvation. Specifically, it refers not to salvation from eternal perdition, but refers to the salvation of our souls from the dispensational punishment of the Lord's governmental dealing. This dispensational punishment of God's governmental dealing is neglected by most Christians today. They seem to have no light concerning it nor understanding of it. Although such a revelation is found in the Bible, most Christians do not have it in their concept.

Even though we are saved, we need to ask ourselves if we are now ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. If the Lord Jesus were to come back today, would you be ready to appear before His judgment seat? Could you stand before Him there in peace? No doubt, your conscience would tell you that in many things you have not yet been saved. If this is your situation, then the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ may have a negative result as far as you are concerned. However, I hope that the result for us all will be positive. But should the result be negative, we shall experience some kind of punishment. That will not be eternal perdition; rather, it will be the dispensational punishment of God's governmental dealing.

THE THREE STAGES OF GOD'S FULL SALVATION

The Initial Stage

The full salvation of the Triune God comprises many items in three stages. The first stage, the

initial stage, is the stage of regeneration. This stage is composed of redemption, sanctification (positional—1:2; 1 Cor. 6:11), justification, reconciliation, and regeneration. In this stage, God has justified us through the redemption of Christ (Rom. 3:24-26) and regenerated us in our spirit with His life by His Spirit (John 3:3-6). Thus, we have received God's eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9) and His eternal life (John 3:15), and become His children (John 1:12-13), who shall not perish forever (John 10:28-29). This initial salvation has saved us from God's condemnation and from eternal perdition (John 3:18, 16).

The Progressing Stage

The second stage of salvation, the progressing stage, is the stage of transformation. This stage is composed of freedom from sin, sanctification (mainly dispositional—Rom. 6:19, 22), growth in life, transformation, building up, and maturing. In this stage, God is freeing us from the dominion of indwelling sin—the law of sin and death—by the law of the Spirit of life, through the effectiveness of the death of Christ working subjectively in us (Rom. 6:6-7; 7:16-20; 8:2). He is sanctifying us by His Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:16), with His holy nature, through His discipline (Heb. 12:10) and His judgment in His own house (1 Pet. 4:17). He is causing us to grow in His life (1 Cor. 3:6-7) and transforming us by renewing the inward parts of our soul by the life-giving Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6, 17-18; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23) through the working of all things (Rom. 8:28). He is building us together into a spiritual house for His dwelling (1 Pet. 2:5; Eph. 2:22) and maturing us in His life (Rev. 14:15) for the completion of His full salvation. Thus, we are being delivered from the power of sin, the world, the flesh, the self, the soul (the natural life), and individualism into maturity in the divine life for the fulfilling of God's eternal purpose.

The Completing Stage

The third stage, the completing stage, is the stage of consummation. This stage is composed of the redemption (transfiguration) of our body, conformity to the Lord, glorification, inheritance of God's kingdom, participation in Christ's kingship, and the topmost enjoyment of the Lord. In this stage, God will redeem our fallen and corrupted body (Rom. 8:23) by transfiguring it into the body of Christ's glory (Phil. 3:21). He will conform us to the glorious image of His firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29), making us wholly and absolutely like Him in our regenerated spirit, transformed soul, and transfigured body. He will

glorify us (Rom. 8:30), immersing us in His glory (Heb. 2:10) that we may enter into His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim. 4:18; 2 Pet. 1:11), into which He has called us (1 Thes. 2:12). He will cause us to inherit His kingdom as the topmost portion of His blessing (James 2:5; Gal. 5:21), even to reign with Christ, to be His co-kings, participating in His kingship over the nations (2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 20:4, 6; 2:26-27; 12:5), and sharing His royal, kingly joy in His divine government (Matt. 25:21, 23). Thus, our body will be freed from the slavery of corruption of the old creation into the freedom of the glory of God's new creation (Rom. 8:21), and our soul will be delivered out of the realm of trials and sufferings (1 Pet. 1:6; 4:12; 3:14; 5:9) into a new realm, full of glory (1 Pet. 4:13; 5:10), sharing and enjoying all the Triune God is, has, and has accomplished, attained, and obtained. This is the salvation, the salvation of our souls, which is ready to be revealed to us at the last time, the grace to be brought to us at the unveiling of Christ in glory (1 Pet. 1:13; Matt. 16:27; 25:31). This is the end of our faith. The power of God is able to guard us unto this that we may obtain it (1 Pet. 1:9). We should eagerly expect such a marvelous salvation (Rom. 8:23) and prepare ourselves for its splendid revelation (Rom. 8:19).

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TWO ASPECTS OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SPIRIT

The sanctification of the Spirit is of two aspects: the sanctification of the Spirit before justification, the first aspect, and the sanctification of the Spirit after justification, the second aspect. With the second aspect of the Spirit's sanctification there are two sides—the positional side and the dispositional side. After God justifies us and regenerates us, immediately the sanctifying Spirit continues His separating work upon us and within us. First, the sanctifying Spirit separates us positionally from things that are common and worldly. This positional sanctification is objective. Simultaneously, the sanctifying Spirit also begins to sanctify us dispositionally. This means that the Spirit is sanctifying our disposition. This is the subjective side of the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The subjective sanctification is what we mean by the work of transformation. Subjective sanctification involves the transformation of our disposition and our inward parts. Therefore, this transformation of our

disposition is the dispositional sanctification of the Spirit.

By now we should be clear concerning the two aspects of sanctification. The first aspect takes place before justification. The second aspect, with its two sides, takes place after justification. After we have been justified and regenerated, the Spirit works to sanctify us positionally and also dispositionally.

EXULTING IN THE LAST TIME

In 1:5 Peter says that we are being guarded by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and this salvation is ready to be revealed at the last time. The last time refers to the time of the Lord's coming (1:7). This last time does not denote a day or an hour. Rather, it signifies a period of time. At the end of this particular period of time, the Lord Jesus will come back.

God's full salvation will be revealed to us, or brought to us, by the Lord's coming back. That is the time this full salvation will become complete to us in experience. Even now this salvation is ready to be revealed.

In 1:6 Peter goes on to say, "In which you exult, though for a little while at present, if it must be, you have been made sorrowful by various trials." Some readers of the Bible may think that the antecedent of "which" in verse 6 is salvation. This understanding is not correct. The relative pronoun "which" does not refer to salvation; instead, it refers to the last time. This means that we exult in the last time. Whenever we consider the last time, we should exult, that is, we should become joyful and rejoice to the uttermost.

MADE SORROWFUL BY VARIOUS TRIALS

In verse 6 Peter not only speaks of exulting in the last time, but also speaks of being made sorrowful by various trials. These trials are sufferings which test the quality of someone or something.

The purpose of the book of 1 Peter is to establish and strengthen the suffering believers who have been chosen by God, sanctified by the Spirit from the world unto God, sprinkled by the redeeming blood of Christ, and regenerated by God the Father unto a living hope, unto an inheritance kept in the heavens for them (1:1-4), yet are as pilgrims still sojourning on this earth (1:1, 17; 2:11). In their sojourn, sufferings are unavoidable. They are used by God to test and prove their faith (1:7), to see whether they will

follow Christ in suffering for doing good (2:19-23; 3:14-18). The sufferings are used to arm them with a mind against the flesh, that they might not live in the lusts of men, but in the will of God (4:1-2), that they might share the sufferings of Christ and rejoice at the unveiling of His glory (4:12-19), that they might be witnesses of the sufferings of Christ (5:1), and that they might be perfected, established, strengthened, and grounded for the eternal glory into which God has called them (5:8-10). This is wholly under God's government that He might judge His chosen people (1:17), to begin His judgment from His own house (4:17). Hence, this book may also be considered a book concerning God's government.

In verse 6 Peter inserts the phrase "if it must be." Peter's intention is to give the suffering saints a comforting word. Sometimes we need a certain trial, a trial that makes us sorrowful. When we are made sorrowful by a particular trial, we need to realize that such a trial is necessary. However, this trial is "for a little while at present." The "last time" is coming. At that time God's full salvation will be revealed to us. Therefore, we should exult in the last time.