

VI. I Peter in Biblical Perspective
The Elect in the Exile
“Praising God for the Blessing of Salvation”
I Peter 1:3–5
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This is our sixth study in I Peter. We will be looking at the doxology of our salvation inheritance. We did an overview in the last study and will take a more in depth look in this study. This is God’s Word, and God’s Word is the truth. I Peter 1:3–12 says [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. [6] In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, [7] so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. [8] Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, [9] obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

[10] Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, [11] inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. [12] It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever, by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I want to give you a bumper sticker I like. My children don’t like it and probably like it even less knowing that I like it. It is the one you see on the back of an RV going down an interstate. It reads ‘Being of sound mind, we spent it.’ There is no inheritance for that family for they are driving it down the interstate right now. In other words, there won’t be an inheritance because we’re using it all up now.

In this study we’re going to look at a Divine inheritance that causes praise to rise to God from Peter’s mouth, his pen and before us. What is an inheritance and what is this Divine inheritance? How did we get this Divine inheritance? Are we assured not only an inheritance but our reception of it? All of this is answered by Peter in an economy of words but almost an unfathomable depth of the riches of God’s truth. We have already looked at the opening two verses that give us the author, the audience and the identification of the author’s strong desire which is that grace and peace be multiplied to his hearers.

In the last study we found out that I Peter 1:3–12 is one sentence of 177 words. We also saw that about two to five months before this was written Paul had done the same thing. Paul was also in Rome and in prison. Paul had written a letter to the churches in Turkey and it’s called Ephesians in the Bible. In Ephesians 1:3–14 Paul writes a doxology which starts out ‘Doxa’ meaning ‘blessed’ and it is mentioned three times in verse 3 which says [3] *Blessed be*

*the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in Christ with every spiritual **blessing** in the heavenly places.* Ephesians 1:3–14 is also one sentence with 228 words and clearly framed in the majesty of the Doctrine of the Trinity to give praise to God. It is an unbelievably, gloriously, overwhelming text of Scripture. I Peter 1:3–12 is almost a repetition of it. Peter's is a Trinitarian, three stanza praise to God for His glorious work which begins with the same concept, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...'

Let's put this in the context here. The Apostle Peter is writing to people who are under persecution in a secularized, pagan society and to the very area he is writing is today called Turkey. The persecution of the believers he is writing to is extending all the way to a fiery ordeal. In other words, it's martyrdom by fire. He is going to give them Gospel motivation, Gospel comfort, Gospel direction and Gospel exhortation but what astounds me is that before he gives them all this Gospel encouragement his first words are adoration. He begins with worship and his worship is focused upon their Gospel inheritance that the tribulation they are under is about to send them to get the inheritance. In other words, they are dying for the faith. What do they inherit when they die for the faith? Yet before he gives them that he first gives them adoration and worship which is foundational to everything.

The second thing that strikes me is that before Peter gets to the Gospel commands he gives the Gospel blessings. In other words, in order to engage and embrace the Gospel imperatives from Christ you must first believe and receive the Gospel inheritance of Christ. He will give them all kinds of imperatives like be sober-minded to prepare their mind, how husbands ought to love their wives, wives how to complete their husbands, parents about their children, etc. He will have command after command after command and you don't do it to be saved but you do it for your Savior because He saved you. Yet before he ever gets to those commands he gives them the blessings that are theirs in Christ.

Paul does the same thing in all his letters as well. In the book of Ephesians before Paul gets to how you are to live for Christ starting in Ephesians 4, he says 28 times in Ephesians 1 through 3 that this is who you are in Christ. He does this so that you have the foundation to receive, embrace and engage in the commands from Christ. So it is with Peter. When Peter starts with our blessings of the inheritance he automatically, reflexively, intuitively and principally gives praise to God. Praise to God from whom all blessings flow. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...' Now this one sentence is broken up in thought in three stanzas. So I will first lay those out for you and then we'll take a closer look at one of them in this study.

Stanza one in I Peter 1:3–5 is praising God for the blessing of our salvation inheritance. Stanza two in I Peter 1:6–9 is praising God for the blessing of our salvation trials. Stanza three in I Peter 1:10–12 is praising God for the blessing of our salvation truth. In this study we'll take a closer look at stanza one to find out what we have inherited. Before I get there the word inheritance begs for some definition. An inheritance are possessions and positions that are legally transferred to an appointed heir. In this text we are told that there is an inheritance kept for us in heaven. So why are you an inheritor of it? Why is there an inheritance for us? Why should we anticipate an inheritance from Him? The answer to that causes Peter to break into a doxology of praise to God.

So let's start by looking at stanza one. I Peter 1:3–5 says [3] *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an **inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by*

God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Why is there an inheritance and why are you an heir? It is because of one reason. The origin is God's great mercy. He doesn't owe it to you. You didn't want it, seek it, or care for it. If you do now then it's because of His mercy and the fact that you have it, is because of His mercy. The inheritance, our investment in it, our rights to it and the fact that we are appointed to it is not just because of mercy but because of God's great mercy. There was great mercy required for us to obtain this inheritance and for it to be provided for us.

Here are three words that I think will help in the understanding here – justice, mercy and grace. Justice is when God gives us what we deserve. Mercy is when God withholds from us what we deserve. Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve. So why am I an heir to this undefiled, imperishable, undiminished, incorruptible inheritance kept in heaven? It is because of God's great mercy.

Here is what in most of our hearts. We actually think God exists for this. We think we deserve this. If God was to give us what we deserved it would be justice and in justice our inheritance would be hell but in His great mercy He withheld the justice due to us. There was a Divine exchange and that was when He sent His Son to the cross. What He withheld from us He placed on His Son who paid for all the sins of all of His people for all of eternity. Then thankfully attached to mercy is grace. That Savior then gives us the forgiveness He has earned and the acceptance His righteousness demands. He gave us what He deserved and He took upon Himself what we deserved. Therefore we have an inheritance and are the heirs of that inheritance. Do you remember the blind beggar who cried out to Jesus 'Son of David have mercy on me' (Luke 18:35–43)? God's mercy is what gave us the ability to cry out to Jesus. God's mercy withheld our judgment, placed it upon Jesus and God's mercy sent us by grace what we don't deserve and that is everlasting life. That is the origin.

Here is another question about inheritance. How do we start receiving this inheritance? We don't get the full inheritance until the last day. Last February I went in for open heart surgery, read the statistics and thought I better make sure everything is in order. I called a lawyer and we put everything into place as we did my last will and testament. I told my children what they were going to get if I didn't make it through the surgery and was a little afraid I'd lose their intercessory prayers for my well-being. Then my wife and I went ahead and gave them part of their inheritance before my surgery which mean there was an initial part of the inheritance given.

We just talked about our initial guarantee of our inheritance from Ephesians 1 and that guarantee is the Holy Spirit into our life now. God has already guaranteed our inheritance to us and He has already identified to us how He is implementing it initially into our life. So the way we start receiving it now is by God bringing you into His family and His sons and daughters are the heirs of His inheritance.

To become a son and daughter God does two things. One way is through the beautiful, Biblical way of adoption. Those who adopt children today in this world are reflecting the very work that God did for you. He sent you the Spirit of Adoption and brought you into His family as sons and daughters. Secondly, He brings His Spirit to you and causes you to be born again as He brings you into His Kingdom through a new birth. I Peter 1:3b says [3b] *According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

The words 'born again' in the Bible is one Greek word and it's used two times in the New Testament and both are used here in I Peter 1. While this word 'born again' is only used here two times the concept, call and necessity of it is throughout Scripture but different words are used to describe the meaning. Paul uses the term new creation for this when he says in II Corinthians 5:17, *[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* John uses the phrase 'born from above' in his books to refer to being born again. James uses the phrase 'you have been **brought forth** by the hand of the Lord.' Jesus says to Nicodemus 'You must be born again.' Ephesians 2:4–5 says *[4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

So if we were born again into the family of God that means we had a first birth. You have a physical birth and a spiritual birth when you become a part of the family of God. How many of you were born because you chose to be born? None of you. How many of you were born because you gave God permission for you to be born? None of you. You are born the first time by the sovereign hand of God. You are born again the second time by the sovereign hand of God. You are born again by the Spirit and the Spirit blows where He wishes. You did not choose God but He chose you.

Secondly, when He gives you a birth it is supernatural. It's death coming to life. You were dead in your sins but brought to life. It is also evidential. When somebody is born the first time how do you know they are born? They have a birth certificate typically but you don't have to have a date on the birth certificate but you need to have a pulse, breath. When you are born again there are no still births. In I Peter 2 he will say that we will long for the pure milk of the Word of God as newborn babes. Those who are born again have a hunger for the unadulterated Word of God. They can't wait to read it, preach it and they long to know it. Peter says those who are born again are obedient children so that when we are born again our desire is to obey our Father who by His mercy has caused us to be born again. God's new birth is sovereign, supernatural and evidential and that's how you become heirs of the Divine inheritance being reserved for you.

Here are a few more questions, what is it that assures us that there is an inheritance, what is it that assures us that we are heirs and that we will inherit the inheritance? I Peter 1:3b says *[3b] he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* It is assured because Jesus came out of the grave and He rose again to life. We have a living Hope because we have a resurrected Christ. This stuff is so rich! So why is the resurrection of Christ an assurance to us? It is because Christ in the resurrection is announcing the triumph of His atoning death. Christ went to the cross to defeat Satan, His enemies, hell, our sins and the grave and we know this wasn't just a martyr's death or a crazy person's death because it was an atoning death. It's not a martyr's death because no man took His life, He gave it. Why? It was to pay for our sins. We know it worked because the grave couldn't hold Him. He was delivered up for our transgressions. He was raised for our justification. His resurrection assures our inheritance and the heirs because He triumphed over sin at the cross. The way I know He triumphed over sin was He triumphed over the grave that could not hold Him back.

There is another piece to this. Paul says in I Corinthians 15:12–20 with the key verse being verse 20, *[12] Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [13] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. [14] And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. [15] We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we*

testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

*[20] But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the **firstfruits** of those who have fallen asleep.* What do we know about the firstfruits? One you are going to get a harvest. Jesus is the firstfruit of the grave and that means that the grave can't hold you back either. Your resurrection is assured to that inheritance because it is tied to His, because He is raised you will be raised. When He is raised He has assured the heirs will be raised because He is the firstfruits.

We are born again to a living hope. I know for most of us the word hope is wishful thinking. 'I hope we'll have grilled hotdogs this Friday. I hope our vacation place is not like last year's.' That is not the hope in the Bible. A definition of hope in the Bible is assured anticipation and expectation of God's promises delivered to His people. Peter is the one who said to Christ after He told them He would die 'God forbid that would happen to you' and Christ said to Peter 'Get thee behind Me Satan.' When Jesus was raised from the dead He appeared to Mary and told her to go tell Peter.' The resurrection is not a theological concept of wishful thinking. It was a promise of God assured and delivered in Christ and Peter knows this isn't a philosophical concept but that it's a historical reality because he was there for almost every one of those 13 times that Christ appeared after His resurrection. Paul tells us He appeared to Peter personally and privately.

So what is the last enemy to be put to death? It is death and isn't that what Jesus did? He went to the cross and defeated the enemies – sin, hell, the grave and Satan. The last enemy He defeated was death when He came up from the grave. When He comes again the last enemy He will destroy and cast into hell will be death itself. And it will be no more.

What is the security of our inherited salvation? When we get an inheritance it is something that thieves can break in and steal and rust can corrupt it. That is why one of the first things you do when you get an inheritance is put it under lock and key so that doesn't happen. People will also go buy insurance on it. This says in I Peter 1:3b–4, *[3b] According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to an **inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.* You have received part of it now but the completion of it is being kept in heaven for you and it is so secure that it is imperishable, undefiled, incorruptible and unfading.

In other words, you don't need to take out an insurance policy to make sure it stays there. I don't what it is but every inheritance in this world is going to fade, going to be corrupted, can be stolen and will be destroyed. There is nothing that lasts in this present age but there is an inheritance that you don't have to insure. That is the inheritance that is being kept for you by Christ who secured it at the cross and announced it in His resurrection and will be given to you at the last time.

Wait, there is one more thing. Not only is your inheritance being kept but you as an heir are being kept. This is the security of the heirs of their salvation. I Peter 1:4–5 says *[4] to an **inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, [5] who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* When is the full reception of this inheritance? It is at the last trumpet, the voice of the arch angel. You already have a new heart, a new record, a new life, a new family, a new home and

you're getting a new mind but you don't have yet the sight presence of Christ in the new heavens and a new earth, but you will because He is being kept for you. You are being kept for Him.

You have seen the programs where the lawyer gathers the family around to go over someone's will and who inherits what. As the lawyer goes through it he gets to one who has been left off and you hear 'I forgot to tell you that he wrote you out of the will' and the person says 'but I'm his son.' 'Well, I'm sorry he wrote you out of the will so you don't have an inheritance.' That will never happen to the sons and daughters of God. You are being kept by God's power through faith in Christ for the inheritance that He is providing for you, to deliver to you at the last time. So not only is the inheritance kept by the power of God but so are the heirs.

Now I want to give you three takeaways. First, is we have a Trinitarian Gospel. We have this inheritance and are heirs because God Himself has secured it. For every inheritance somebody worked for it and it wasn't the heir. The heir gets the inheritance as a gift. Your inheritance is a gift by God's mercy and grace but God the Father Himself worked for it to give His Son. The Son went to the cross to do the work of our redemption. The Spirit of God came and brought you from death unto life. The Father brought you in His mercy, the Son secured you in His atoning death and resurrection and the Spirit brought you from death unto life. God's work was necessary and only God could provide this inheritance for you and secure you for this inheritance. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Secondly, is the inheritance that we have. What is our inheritance? To understand what Peter means by inheritance you have to understand the richness of the Old Testament. Over ninety percent of the time whenever the Bible talks about an inheritance it is talking about God's people in the Promised Land with God Himself. When God told Moses in Exodus 33 all that He was going to give them Moses said 'God, we'd rather die in the wilderness if You don't go with us for how will the people not know that we are Your people if we do not inherit You in the land? It is Your presence that identifies us.'

So what is the inheritance you get? In the last day, at the last trumpet you will be brought into a new heavens and a new earth with a new body and you will be given eternity in the presence of the Lord. You will behold Him! You love Him now but you haven't seen Him but you will see Him in all of His glory. That will be our inheritance and we are being kept for that moment.

The third takeaway is 'our' and not 'the'. So what do I mean by this? I Peter 1:3a says *[3a] Blessed be the God and Father of **our** Lord Jesus Christ!* Notice how he didn't say 'the' but he could have said 'the' and it would have read 'Blessed be the God and Father of *the* Lord Jesus Christ' and that would have been right also. But he says '*Blessed be the God and Father of **our** Lord Jesus Christ!*' So my question now is, is He your Lord Jesus Christ? If He is, you have a doxology to say/sing of a Divine inheritance that has been secured and you will be secured.

What inheritance would you rather have than this one? Everything else fades, perishes and they are all corruptible. What greater inheritance than Christ Himself to be yours? In order to have this One you must receive Him. Do you remember what else Peter said 'He has caused us to be born again'? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Take just a few moments and pray silently. If the only inheritance you have today are those that can be stolen, removed that are perishable and can be defiled and corrupted but you don't have the Savior then today you can have a living Hope, a living Savior and an inheritance that is kept for you and He will keep you for the inheritance. May I plead with you? Why would you have

what perishes for the One who gives you everlasting life with Him in a new heavens and a new earth? Why would say 'no, I'd rather be cast away and inherit judgment in hell than to receive Your mercy and be born again to a living Hope'? If you would like to pray with someone please call us here at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. I invite you to Christ today so that this doxology of praise can become yours. If today your Divine inheritance has been refreshed in your mind as a gift of mercy from the Father, secured by the death and resurrection of Christ and been given to you as you have been born again by the Spirit, then bless His holy Name. Blessed be the God and Father of our Savior, Amen.

Power Point

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DOXOLOGY OF SALVATION

STANZA ONE – (vv. 3–5)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Inheritance

STANZA TWO – (vv. 6–9)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Trials

STANZA THREE – (vv. 10–12)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Truth {note}

A CLOSER VIEW OF STANZA ONE – (vv.3–5)

Praising God for the Blessing of our Salvation Inheritance

- I. The Origin of our Inherited Salvation – Why?
- II. The Initiation of our Inherited Salvation – How?
- III. The Assurance of our Inherited Salvation – What?
- IV. The Security of our Inherited Salvation – When?
- V. The Security of the Heirs of their Salvation – Whom?

LIFE TAKEAWAYS

- I. The Inheritance
- II. Trinitarian Inheritance
- III. Not "The" but "Our"