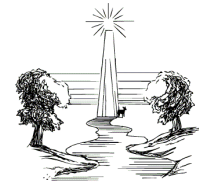


# A Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3-12



## Blessings of New Birth

- ❑ Read 1 Peter 1:3-5. After giving praise to God, Peter writes, “In his great mercy, he has given us new birth...” (1:3b, *NIV*). He has “caused us to be born again...” (1:3b, *ESV*). Jesus had said, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3, *NIV*). This refers to the new life (regeneration) brought by the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup>
  1. What blessings are believers “born again into”? (1:3-4) How would you describe these blessings?
  
- ❑ In the Old Testament, “inheritance” usually referred to the land God promised to his people.<sup>2</sup> In the New Testament, the “inheritance” transcends and leaves behind earthly land. It is expressed in terms of eternal life, the kingdom of God, and “a new heaven and a new earth.”<sup>3</sup> Unlike any earthly inheritance, it “can never perish, spoil or fade” (1:4, *NIV*).
  2. Verse 5 says believers are “shielded” (guarded, protected) until their inheritance is fully realized.<sup>4</sup> According to verse 5, what is needed for us to be kept safe?<sup>5</sup>

## Joy in Suffering

- ❑ As believers, when we think about the blessings of our new birth, we have reason to rejoice! But what about the trouble and suffering we still experience?
- ❑ The Bible says that people who receive Christ are “saved” (*Romans 10:9-10*). However, it’s obvious that Christians do not escape all trouble and suffering in this world. As Jesus told his disciples, “In this world you will have trouble” (*John 16:33*). If we are truly saved, why do we still have trouble and suffering? It’s helpful to consider the “time of salvation.”
  - Past – we *were saved* when we first believed. We were born again and declared righteous by God’s grace so we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life (*Titus 3:4-7*).
  - Present – we are *being saved* as we progress in the Christian life (*1 Corinthians 1:18*). This process of salvation occurs in the present age in the midst of a fallen, unwell world.
  - Future – we *will be saved* when Jesus Christ is revealed at the end of the age (*1 Peter 1:5, 7, 13*). At that time, our salvation will be complete.
- ❑ In Peter’s letter, the future aspect of salvation is evident. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9.

<sup>1</sup> When we receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we are ‘born of God’ (*John 1:12-13*), ‘made [spiritually] alive’ (*Ephesians 2:5*), and given a ‘new life’ (*Romans 6:4*). It’s important to note that this new life was provided through Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. Our new life is based in our union with Christ. God ‘made us alive with Christ’ as he ‘raised us up with Christ’ (*Ephesians 2:4-6*); ‘...just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may live a new life’ (*Romans 6:4*). Thus our ‘living hope’ is ‘through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead’ (*1 Peter 1:3*).

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 32:13; Numbers 26:52-54; Deuteronomy 12:10; Joshua 11:23; Ezra 9:12; Jeremiah 3:18.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 19:29; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Galatians 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Colossians 1:12; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-7.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Not only is our inheritance kept for us [v. 4b]; we are kept for our inheritance.’ (Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988], 49).

<sup>5</sup> ‘God’s power’ is needed – the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, and won the victory over sin and death. Verse 5 also says we are guarded ‘through faith.’ Schreiner notes, ‘God’s power protects us because his power is the means by which our faith is sustained’ (Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* [Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2003], 65).

3. Believers experience “all kinds of trials” for a reason. According to verse 7, what is the purpose of trials in the believer’s life? How is gold used as an illustration?<sup>6</sup>
- ❑ Even though the recipients of Peter’s letter “suffer grief in all kinds of trials” they still rejoice (1:6). Even though they have not physically seen Jesus Christ, and do not see him now, they are “filled with inexpressible and glorious joy” (1:8).<sup>7</sup>
4. How can we, as Christians, be joyful in times of trouble and suffering, even when are tempted to feel abandoned by God?<sup>8</sup>
- 📖 *Paul wrote, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18, NIV).*
- 📖 *Paul also wrote, “For our light and momentary troubles<sup>9</sup> are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Corinthians 4:17, NIV).*
- 📖 *“For we live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).*



## Fulfillment of Prophecy

- ❑ The salvation that has come to Christians is the same salvation foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Christians are blessed to live in this time of fulfillment!<sup>10</sup>

## A Living Hope

5. The “living hope” presented in Peter’s letter helps us to “live well in an unwell world.” What can we do to make this “living hope” a bigger part of our lives?

## Reflection & Application

- Do you have a “living hope” that brings joy to your life even in the midst of trouble and suffering? Do you have the hope of an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade? Such “living hope” is found only in Jesus Christ. Do you need to trust in him?
- As a believer, how are you affected by the troubles in your life? How do troubles affect your hope and joy? In the midst of troubles in this unwell world, where do you focus? This week, reflect on this lesson and passages like Romans 8:18-39 and 2 Corinthians 4:16-18, and ask God to increase the “weight” (importance and influence) of the “living hope” in your life.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Fire’ was used to refine (purify) gold. Trials and suffering purify and test the believer’s faith, proving it to be genuine. Though gold is one of the most durable and precious metals, the believer’s faith is of much greater worth. Gold is durable, but it will perish (2 Peter 3:10). But the outcome of faith is the inheritance that cannot perish, spoil or fade. Such faith, proven by testing, will result in praise, glory and honor when Christ is revealed in the future.

<sup>7</sup> Some commentators say this joy is future, when salvation is complete. But Jobes notes, ‘Although the deliverance of the believer through faith in Christ will produce joy in the end, that joy is nevertheless tasted in this present life’ (Karen Jobes, *1 Peter* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005], 92).

<sup>8</sup> Consider verses 3-12, the other verses listed below, and also Romans 5:3-4 and James 1:2-4.

<sup>9</sup> Paul’s troubles were actually ‘heavy’ (see 2 Corinthians 11:23-28), but Paul considered them ‘light’ compared to the hope of glory. When compared to the glory of heaven, what normally seems ‘very heavy and lasting forever’ is ‘light and lasting only a moment’ (or ‘for a little while’). So Paul looked beyond his present sufferings to the future hope (2 Corinthians 4:18).

<sup>10</sup> Jesus told his disciples, ‘Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it’ (Luke 10:23-24, NIV).